2 FREE GIFTS!
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GAMES MASTER PRESENTS

VOLUME 7 WINTER 2015

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO MINECRAFT

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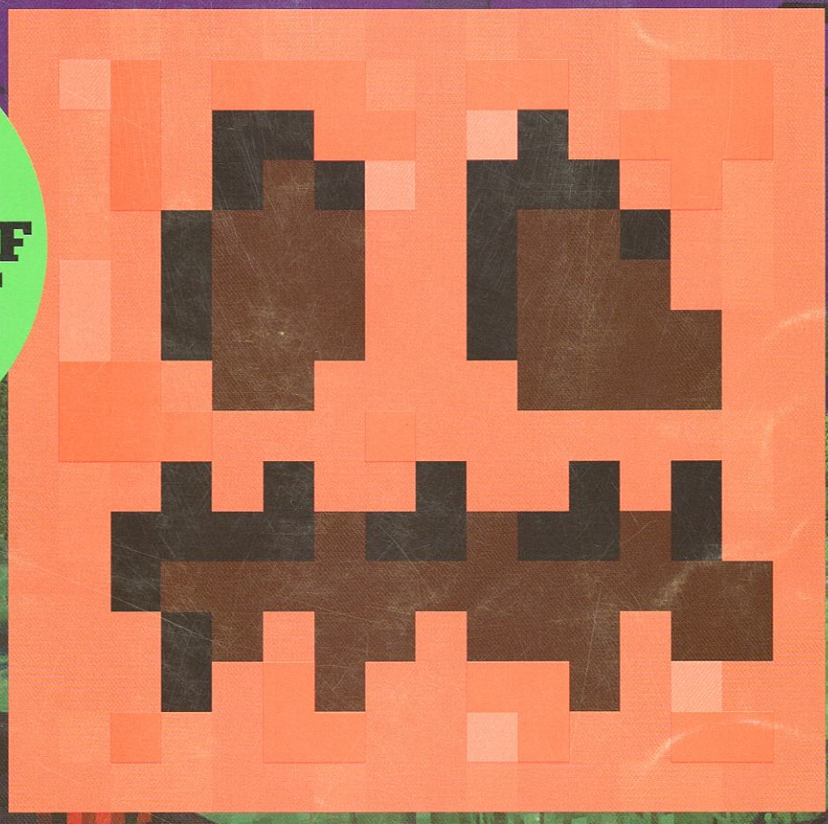
THE STORY OF MINECRAFT

50 blockbusting moments!

DINNERBONE INTERVIEW

Minecraft's future, modding, and Microsoft



BE AFRAID!

31 CHILLING HALLOWEEN MODS

Ghastly new ways to play Minecraft

+

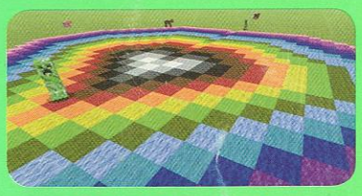
MAKE A CREEPER CUSHION

10 ALTERNATIVES TO MINECRAFT

MINECRAFT MOVIE NEWS

Spooktacular!

FEATURING



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Mojang's other masterpiece

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Monument maps mastered

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Future

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GamesMaster PRESENTS

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO MINECRAFT

"It's exactly the right time to celebrate the black heart of Minecraft"

Halloween is almost here, banging on the door of your house like a mouldering zombie, so it's exactly the right time to celebrate the barely-beating black heart of Minecraft. Why? Because it's a game as much about surviving the horrors of the night as it is about wonderful builds and clever construction. That's why we've got a chilling rundown of the game's most frightening moments and, if you're feeling especially brave, a list of 31 mods you can use to make the game even more horrifying. Or, if you'd prefer something that's blood-curdling but cuddly we've also got a guide to making your own (thankfully non-explosive) creeper cushion.

It's not just about the scary stuff, though. There's also a whopping rundown of the most important moments in Minecraft, such as amazing development stories and the shocking origin of the creeper. Like everything else in Minecraft, even after six years, no other game has the same power to excite and amaze.

Matt

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Subscribe online at www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk
Printed in the UK by William Gibbons
Distributed in the UK by Seymour Distribution Ltd, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT, Tel: 020 7429 4000.

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Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR).
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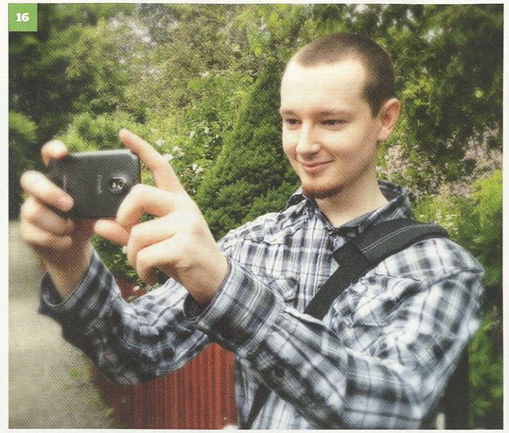
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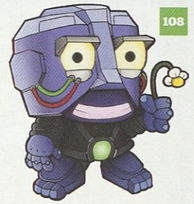
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TOP 50 MINECRAFT MOMENTS

34 THE 50 MOMENTS THAT MADE MINECRAFT
Building your first house, world-altering updates and the accidental creation of the creeper - these are the 50 moments that define the Mojang classic

80 Mineshaft

90 Stronghold

98 Deep Ocean

106 Black Forest

112 Village

116 Ice Plains

144 The End

Steve does a runner from a zombie part way through Tom's mega marathon.

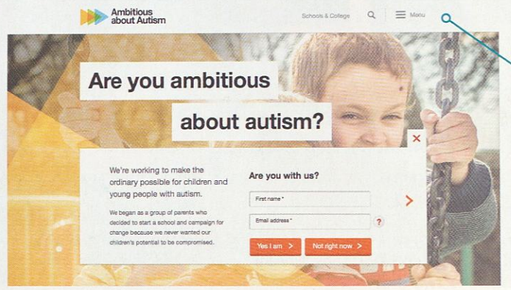
MINECRAFT MARATHON!

Tom Kirkman-Wood streams for 12 hours for Ambitious About Autism

It might feel like you'd like to play for 12 hours straight, but when it comes down to it, it's actually nice to be able to walk away from the screen occasionally. However, the rather admirable fourteen-year-old Tom Kirkman-Wood settled down for the long haul for a 12 hour live stream of Minecraft to raise funds for the charity Ambitious About Autism.

Tom himself has autism and wanted to highlight the work of the leading charity, and how important it is. "I am very keen to spread the word about autism and love busting autism myths," he says. "I also happen to be a big Minecraft fan. The 12 hours is just 12 hours of playing in one go – I have done that kind of length before so I know that I can handle it – however it is always hard. I will occasionally ask people in chat to set me goals and challenges."

The stream ran from 8am to 8pm, with plenty of people supporting Tom through the long hours. "We are always delighted when the young people we represent and support want to raise money for us," explains Jolanta Lasota, the CEO of Ambitious About Autism. "This fundraiser is a great example of the different ways that you can raise money. While it is true that Minecraft is a particularly popular game for young people with autism, 12 hours is quite the commitment." You can find out more about the great work that his charity does here: http://bit.ly/mcambitious ■


Ambitious about Autism
Schools & College
Menu
Are you ambitious about autism?
We're working to make the ordinary possible for children and young people with autism.
We began as a group of parents who decided to start a school and campaign for change because we never wanted our children's potential to be compromised.
Are you with us?
First name *
Email address *
Yes I am >
Not right now >

Minecraft fan Tom Kirkman-Wood conducted a 12-hour buildathon in support of this great autism charity.

"Hey Mojang, let's do something strange and wonderful..."

Rob McElhenney takes crafting to the silver screen

It's not exactly been an easy ride, but the Minecraft movie is finally back in production with a new director in the chair. Announced by Mojang at Minecon, Rob McElhenney is now in charge of bringing blocks to the big screen.

McElhenney doesn't have a long list of directing credits but he's the co-creator and star of comedy TV show It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia, and has written multiple episodes. He's also a big fan of Minecraft, which makes a huge difference when it comes to video game adaptations hitting the big screen. "Hey Mojang, let's do something strange and wonderful," he Tweeted just before the announcement.

After the success of the awesome LEGO Movie – oh good, now the song's stuck in your head too – Warner Bros bought the rights to the Minecraft film back in February 2014. Shawn Levy of Night At The Museum was attached to the project, but that old 'creative differences' chestnut cropped up and he couldn't agree with Mojang on the way things should be done. This is equally good news as it means Mojang knows what it wants. Given that McElhenney is such a fan of the game, Mojang is clearly happy to hand over the reins. Hopefully we'll hear more soon as production starts, and it'll be more LEGO Movie than, dare we say it, Pixels... ■

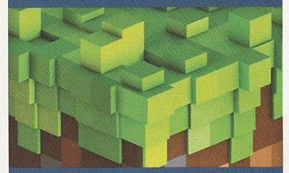
STAT ATTACK

926
Number of pieces in the huge The Mine LEGO set.

5
The number of episodes of Telltale's Story Mode that are coming.

7,786,974
The incredible number of The Diamond Minecart subscribers

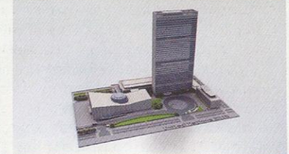
NEWSFLASH



1 Sounds good
The Minecraft soundtrack from Daniel Rosenfeld – aka C418 – is making its way to a physical CD release. Not only that but there'll be a limited edition vinyl version too.

2 Craft food
Sick of not playing and eating instead? CaliBurger in Seattle is the first restaurant where you can play Minecraft at the same time with a shared 'Cali Island' map.

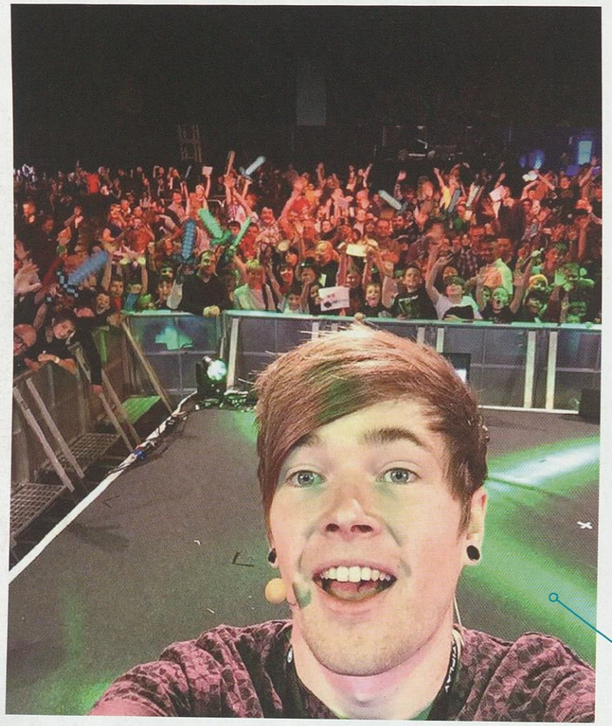
3 Green fingers
Children in Stockholm have been tasked with designing the city's first public rooftop garden in Minecraft. It's huge and will connect three buildings at roof level.



4 Dad gets priorities right
Redditor Officialvide showed Minecraft to his dad who instantly got to building the United Nations HQ in New York. Not a bad first build...

THE DIAMOND MINECART IS NUMBER ONE

Daniel Middleton has the most popular channel on YouTube



He's done it! The Diamond Minecart is officially the most watched channel on YouTube with more than 402 million views of his Minecraft videos in July 2015 alone. These are truly incredible figures that don't just take him above the views of YouTube heavyweight PewDiePie, but also WWE, Buzzfeed and even Taylor Swift (but she can just shake it off).

When it comes to subscribers, PewDiePie still holds the top spot with 39 million followers. The Diamond Minecart has a mere 8 million subs, but that didn't stop his chart busting success. Since the launch of his channel in July 2012, Dan has had more than 4,289,291,778 views. Yes, that's 4 billion pairs of eyes on his blocky videos. Dan is part of the Maker Network along with Pewds and fellow Minecrafter Stampylonghead who is also from the UK.

The chart comes from site Tubefilter, which shows that Dan has clambered all the way up from the number six spot to take the title. There are three gaming-related channels in the top ten, with Dan at number one with 402 million views, PewDiePie at number 6 with 373 million and PopularMMOs at number 10 with 282 million. Yet it's Minecraft that's sitting at number one. Other blocky specific channels aren't doing bad either. Stampy is at number 39 on the chart with 165 million views, which is sitting just above that little known celebrity Katy Perry. Long live the Minecraft domination! ■

Daniel Middleton, otherwise known as proprietor of The Diamond Minecart, in front of just some his adoring fans.

TALKING HEADS

"To put it in perspective, because this is something that I didn't know before we started working with Telltale, so basically each episode is like creating a movie. It's a crazy amount of work and they do such an impressive job with coming up with an entire script. It's a movie but more complicated."

Lydia Winters

Minecraft brand director, @LydiaWinters

"I still remember when sprinting was the end of PvP. And enchanting. And bows not insta-spamming. My point is everything is scary if you don't want to change. We always pulled through. Please work with us and help make something even better."

Nathan Adams

Mojang developer, @Dinnerbone

"Much of No Man's Sky will be explained to people, I would imagine, from wikis and stuff like that. Like in Minecraft, the crafting system I thought was a really bold move to just not tell anyone the formulas for it. We will be doing similar things with that crafting."

Sean Murray

Hello Games founder and No Man's Sky creator, @NoMansSky

"I'm personally excited by how educators are incorporating Minecraft into their curriculum and what their students are picking up. Students in Scotland are learning about city planning and engineering by reimaging, redesigning and then building in Minecraft what they think Dundee waterfront should look like."

Anthony Salcito

Vice President of Worldwide Education, Microsoft, @AnthonySalcito

You can have all manner of faces, hairdos and gender assignments in Story Mode.

STORY MODE LETS YOU CHOOSE YOUR HERO

Jesse can be a boy or a girl in Telltale's adventure

Minecraft Story Mode was already looking ridiculously exciting, but it just got even better. Previously our hero wasn't customisable, but now Telltale Games has confirmed that massive Minecraft fan Jesse has the option to be male or female, with multiple appearances. This is the first time that the developer has ever had a customisable character in one of its story driven games, and Minecraft is the perfect place to start.

The extra skins will just add an extra layer of personalisation to the game, so whether you are boy or girl Jesse, you will always be accompanied by your pet pig Reuben. Patton Oswalt is the voice of male Jesse, while actress Catherine Taber will be taking on the role of his female equivalent. You might just recognise Taber's voice from Metal Gear Solid: Peacewalker, Star Wars: The Clone Wars and a slew of other games. You'll also hear her in the upcoming Disney Infinity 3.0.

Story Mode was previewed at PAX last month to lucky convention goers in a fully block-based stand, complete with bookcases, potions and Minecraft weapons. The full game will be made up of five episodes and allows us to travel all over the world of Minecraft as Jesse and friends hunt down the legendary Order Of The Stone. Starring Ashley Johnson, Corey Feldman and even featuring brand director Lydia Winters, the first episode will be out in autumn across PS4, PS3, Xbox One, Xbox 360, mobile, PC and, yes, even Wii U. And we can't wait. ■

THE ULTIMATE MINECRAFT PC

This mind-blowing real-life redstone rig will give you green eyes

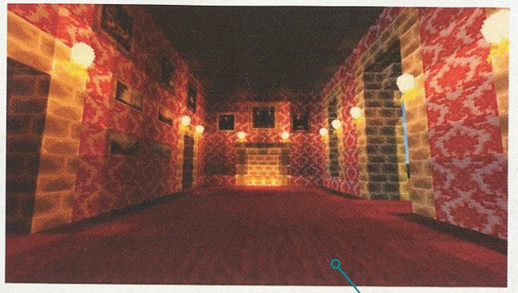
Maker Spencer Kern got his inspiration from a Redstone light up toy.

No, it's not a screen grab from the game, this is an actual living, breathing redstone PC!

I thought your PC was cool with a few LED fans? Well in steps this astonishing custom build from Microsoft artist Spencer Kern and suddenly you'll want a whole new rig to play with. Not only has Kern built the PC from scratch, but he also created custom peripherals to match.

"This redstone PC build was meant to be a celebration of not only the new Minecraft Windows 10 Edition Beta, but also the launch of Windows 10 itself," says Kern on his build blog, where you can see the full process. "I wanted to create a PC thats only purpose in life was to play Minecraft and look good doing it." Inspired by a redstone block light up toy, Kern fully designed the interior and internals of the PC and had to customise each component to fit in the cube. Even the power button was specially designed and used as many parts as the entire acrylic frame of the PC itself. Plus, there's a tiny Steve model hidden amongst the motherboard, SSD and fans.

To finish the project off, Kern crafted a customised Xbox One controller with keypad, complete with creeper face instead of the traditional logo. He also modded a mechanical keyboard with custom keycaps, a mouse and made a headset to match. It's thoroughness to the cause is pretty mind-bending. You can see more of the full build and Kern's step by step process here on his blog: http://bit.ly/redstonepc ■



Here's what the inside of Penicuik House probably looked like before it was eaten by fire.

MINECRAFT RESTORES A RUIN TO GLORY

Penicuik house comes back to life with 350,000 blocks

Like history? Interested in architecture? Well this could well be right up your cobbled street. Penicuik House in Midlothian, Scotland was built in the 1760s but destroyed by fire in 1899, and all that's left now is a ruin. However, games education company Immersive Minds stepped in, and the full house has been recreated in Minecraft in all its former glory. All of this been done in order to celebrate 25 years of National Doors Open Day.

"The build has taken 86 hours to complete and includes a topographically accurate, 1:1.5 scale landscape and structure comprising of over 350,000 blocks, most of which have been retextured to match the look and feel of both incarnations of Penicuik House," explains Immersive Mind's Stephen Reid. Impressively, the house has been built as a ruin as well as what it once looked like, complete with roaring log fires and paintings on opulently wallpapered rooms.

National Doors Open Day is all about exploring historical locations that no one ever gets to see, so this means people can see how Penicuik House once looked, even if we can't anymore. "Doors Open Days appeals to our natural nosiness to get in and look around all the wonderful buildings that make up our towns and cities," explains John Pelan of the Civic Trust. "We are delighted that Sir Robert and Lady Clerk agreed to the mad idea to Minecraft the amazing Penicuik House and are astonished by the work that Immersive Minds have achieved." You can see a video of the recreation here: http://bit.ly/immersiveminds ■

HOT OR NOT

Minecraft movie
We admit, it is happening and we do need it.

Wii U Story Mode
Yes, Minecraft on Ninty! Full game next?

Star Wars mash-up
The force is seriously strong with those skins.

RC Ghast
Waiting until next year for this drone just sucks.

Creeper scarves
Oh wait, no, they're for you if you're chilly.

HOT ——— NOT

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When you're starting out, rivers can be a fantastic source of sand and clay blocks. the latter of these can be used to craft bricks that look far better than cobblestone when building houses.

If you're attempting to build a quick and easy farm. it can be handy to place it near a river. That way you can use the water at hand to irrigate without having to go back and forth for miles with a bucket.

Fairly obviously these biomes are generally great for fishing, so pull up a rod!

RIVER

These winding waterways can cut straight through other biomes, or occasionally act as dividers between two different biomes. They don't flow along a current like real life rivers, but they will usually have an ocean at one end. Very, very rarely you'll find a paradoxical river that flows back into itself like some kind of freakish liquid ouroboros. Also available in frozen flavours. That's the temperature, not the Disney musical, sadly.

MOJANG INTERVIEW

Dinnerbone

A glimpse at the future of Minecraft with Dinnerbone

PROFILE

Alias Dinnerbone

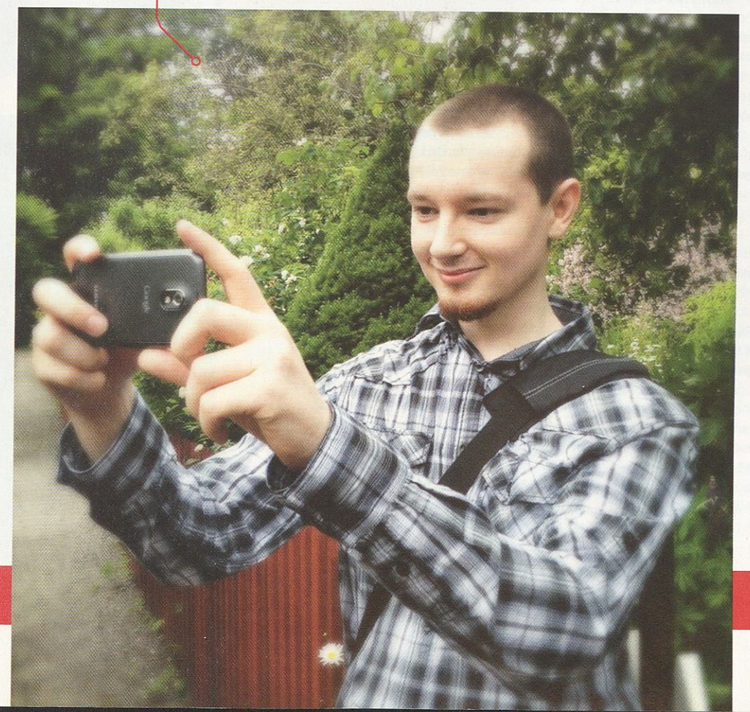
Nathan 'Dinnerbone' Adams is one of the key members of the Minecraft team. Born in 1991 in Shrewsbury in the UK, he learnt programming by creating MSN bots. He didn't go to college, instead working for a web development firm for a few years after secondary school. After helping to build a set of tools to customise multiplayer servers, he was hired by Mojang and moved to Stockholm in 2012.

Nathan 'Dinnerbone' Adams is a tough guy to pin down. The 24-year-old coder is one of the most public faces of Mojang since the departure of Notch in the wake of the Microsoft buyout, and certainly the Minecraft developer that's closest to the community. But he rarely gives full interviews to journalists.

Dinnerbone's relaxed attitude and penchant for doling out hugs to anyone that wants one means that it's impossible for him to walk through a room at Minecon without getting swamped by people asking for a signature on a foam pickaxe. We managed to fight off the hordes for a few minutes to ask him his thoughts on a number of issues close to the hearts of many players.

The wide-ranging interview covers the pros and cons of the Microsoft buyout, Mojang's experiments with virtual reality, how decisions are made about Minecraft, and how the different versions of the game will eventually become one. We even got to hear what the pressure from fans feels like, what he's proudest of contributing to the game, and the latest progress on the fabled mod API. Let's dig in, shall we?

A rare glimpse of the lesser spotted Dinnerbone out in the wild biome



First of all, how are you enjoying Minecon?
I'm actually enjoying it a lot. I was extremely nervous the weeks coming up to it, I was like: What if things aren't ready? What if this goes wrong? I don't know much about anything! Everything's going to go wrong! I was so panicked. But now that we're here, it has been amazing – I'm really glad that everything has gone so well.

How is it different from previous Minecons?
It's hard to answer that because they're all so different from each other. I think every single Minecon has its own personality, because we do them in different areas. When we went to France a lot of people were super-excited, I guess because we had it at Disney – people were suddenly Disney fans. Then we went to Orlando and all that. Over here at London Minecon, everyone seems so polite. This is the most polite Minecon I've ever been to. Which is really weird, because I'm walking by and they're like 'I dunno, should I go say hi? I'm not sure if he's busy. Is there a queue? I like queuing...' The people are very friendly – I've met so many people. I love to hug, and introduce myself. It's really cool. I think every single Minecon we do we get a bit better at organising it and hosting it, and I think that's really showing this year. A lot of things seem more professional. I love pointing out how we're not professionals!

Speaking to people, they have almost said that Microsoft has had a smaller presence here than in previous years – they're a little bit wary of being too overbearing.
I definitely got that feeling. They do have the biggest booth – I think that's the case, it certainly seems that way.

But it's labelled with Microsoft everywhere.
Yeah, it really feels like it fits in. They've got PlayStations inside there, and everyone I've talked to who's gone near the booth has said: 'is that a PlayStation? What are Microsoft doing with PlayStations?" I think that kinda shows that they're not here to be intimidating, they're not here to be (adopts robot voice) 'Windows is the best. Buy Xboxes.' They're here just to show, like: "we exist, we help with this stuff. Here it is, you can play here and here. Isn't that cool?'

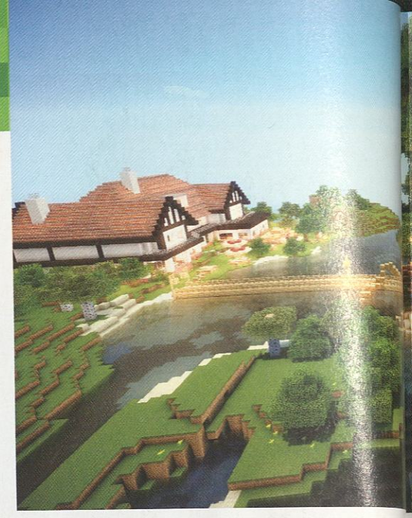
You've just showed off a lot of the stuff that's coming up in a future update. What direction, in as broad as terms as possible, is Minecraft heading in?

"WE ARE ULTIMATELY AIMING TO CONVERGE ALL THE VERSIONS INTO ONE EDITION."

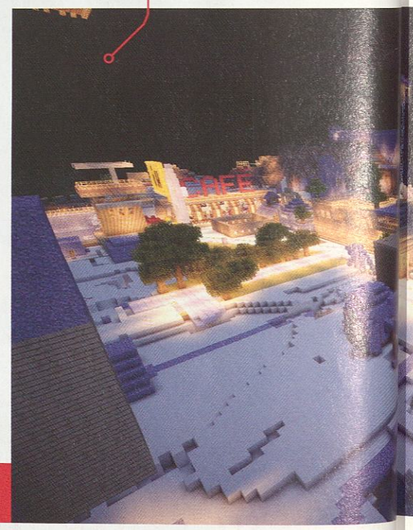
How much of that do you think is due to the fact that you guys are now owned by Microsoft, and that you have support from them?
I would like to imagine that none of it, but I know that's not the case. We did get a lot of help from Microsoft. I think they've always been one of the biggest sponsors, so they've always had one of the biggest booths here. But this year... I guess it helps having this big parent company who can put pressure on things if they're not going well enough. Or if there's any kind of doubt in a certain area, then it really helps having someone who can apply pressure there and make sure it's done. I think that really helps. It's like the security blanket in case something's not right with us, and we'll just say: 'OK Microsoft, you go help with that.'

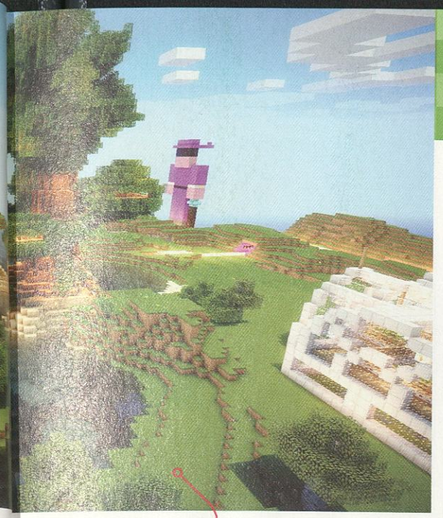
Forwards. That's the answer to that. It's very hard to say. We're very specific about this: we do not plan the future. We'll plan out one update only, so we'll decide: okay, we like how the game is right now. It feels like it's lacking in this area. So we're going to expand on this area. So in the past we've decided: Redstone – it's cool, we could do some more. So we had a redstone update. We had a Pretty Scary update where we said these could be expanded on. And now we're doing the combat update, because I felt for a very long time that combat is something that could be awesome but isn't. It is fairly awesome, but there's so many things where it could be better. So we decided that that was the part we would expand on. After that? I don't know. We'll sit down all together when the combat update is out and be like okay, that is what it feels natural to us to expand into.

We did try planning: 'after this we're going to do this update and we're going to do this and this is the direction we're heading in', and it just doesn't feel natural, it feels too scripted. It doesn't feel like it's the course of action that you like fitting into. The way we're doing it right now feels like the game is progressing

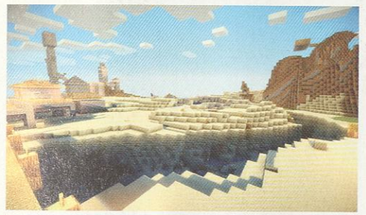


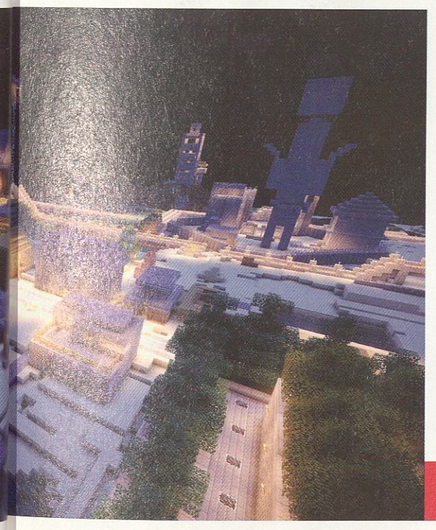
Minecraft is already ace, but Dinnerbone is convinced it can get even better





Mojang don't plan ahead; instead, they improve Minecraft one update at a time





itself and we're just helping it along with the course that it's choosing, and the players are choosing, and the community is choosing. If we just try and say: "okay we're going to do this and this and this" – I don't know, I think we'd lose that a little bit. It's what we think we're going to do, but is it right for the game? Is it right for the community? So the answer is always forwards. Always forwards.

Obviously there's positives and negatives of that approach. I'd guess that one of the negatives is that it occasionally appears a bit leaderless? You've got however many millions of people out there leading you. Have you come across any difficulties as a result of that?
I definitely understand where you're coming from, and that has come up more and more these days because we're trying to merge both the Pocket and the PC teams together, so the team size just doubled. And now we've also got Microsoft – we've got a team in Redmond, so the team just doubled again. And the more people we have on the team,

"INITIALLY EVERYONE WAS REALLY SCARED. I TOTALLY UNDERSTAND THAT."

the harder it is to decide which direction we're taking. So it is really hard to say.

Do all parts of the team have influence on that direction? Does the Redmond team have influence on the direction that Minecraft is taking?
They have influence, as much as anyone else – which is that we can talk about it. It's obviously harder just from a logistics point of view for the Redmond team to be like: 'hey guys, isn't this a cool thing...' just because of the time zone difference. But they have influence! They fly over, we fly over to them, and we'll just talk about things: 'well this is actually a really good idea. Let's do this.'. That goes for anyone on the Minecraft team. If they're in Redmond, if they're in Stockholm, if someone's on vacation – that's happened before! Someone's gone on vacation and said they're not going to work on the game like two weeks: "Hey guys, I'm on the phone from wherever I am and I had this really good idea – let's do it."

I'm trying to work out what your working relationship is with Microsoft, which is an open question. I think it's something that people are probably quite interested in. So, it's very much like you guys are still the ones in charge, is that right?
Yes. I like to say so! Jens still finalises stuff.

So if there is such a thing as a leader, it's him?
Yes, he's the lead developer and lead designer on Minecraft as a general thing. So all decisions, if there ever needs to be a final 'I have veto rights', it's Jens. He still has that pull over everyone. But for most things we all kinda align on the same idea and direction. so it just helps a lot.

How do you think the fans have responded over the past year, now there's been a little bit of time for the news to sink in?
Initially everyone was really scared.
I totally understand that. I was scared.
I will admit that to anyone who asks.
But I think as time goes on, people have kinda realised that actually nothing really has changed. There have actually been good things that have come out of it, and people actually seem really happy that this has happened. Pocket Edition for example – we've got lots of new content for Pocket Edition. We would never be able to do that with a small team in Stockholm, so people actually seem really happy that this has happened and that we do have all this new manpower to help out with stuff like that. So I'd like to imagine that everyone is really positive about it right now. It certainly feels that way.

For what it's worth, when I've been speaking to people around Minecon, they don't feel like anything has changed.
I think that's a good thing. It's a good feeling to have.

We've heard that you've done some VR stuff in the past,. Is there any truth in that rumour?
We have experimented with VR stuff in the past. That was a very long time ago. We tried the Oculus Dev Kit 1 – I think we tried something with that. We ultimately decided that we just didn't have the time do it ourselves. We did acknowledge that it was a really cool thing if we got it working.

So what was your first experience of using the Hololens?
I think I tried the demo that they have right now about a month ago for the first time and my mind was blown. It was amazing just seeing the world rise up out of the table. It was just great.

The version that's running on the Hololens is the new Windows 10 version of Minecraft, right?
I believe so, yes.

So what's the relationship between this new Windows 10 version and the existing desktop version?
First I have to point out that I don't actually work on that, so I'm only gonna be able to repeat what I know. But it is based off of, and pretty much is, the Pocket Edition version that happens to run on Windows 10. It's really hard to explain this because I know the technical details but not how it impacts people. So the relationship is very confusing, and we're trying everything we got a bunch of new things – like boats for example. People really like the boats in Pocket Edition. And PC edition is getting all this new stuff to The End – so when is Pocket Edition getting The End? When is PC edition getting the boats? We are trying to figure out what is the best plan to do feature development, and how do we make sure that everything is applied to all platforms simultaneously. We don't have details on how we're going to do that right now, we just know that it will happen as soon as we can possibly have it. Because we want boats on PC! And we want The End on Pocket. So we've just to make sure somehow that everything works everywhere at the same time, ideally. I don't know if you've seen the feature list for Pocket Edition now, but it's really really long. They're catching up at an incredible rate.

Yeah, the entirety of the Nether!
Yes. So I think it'll be very soon that we reach feature parity, and then we'll just say: "OK, we just added this – it works everywhere. Great!"

"I DO FEEL THE PRESSURE A LOT. I DON'T THINK I GET IT NEARLY AS BAD AS NOTCH."

can to dim down the confusion with this. But the Windows 10 version is compatible with Pocket Edition, so you can play with your friends on Pocket Edition. It's more suited, I believe, for Surface or tablets – a handheld device that's slightly bigger than a mobile phone. But for people who want to play on PC servers, or use mods, then the PC edition is strong and alive and that is the version we recommend. If you want to play a PC edition you play PC edition.

We are ultimately aiming to converge these into one edition, because it is confusing. But we want to merge them into the same version anyway and that's always been one of our goals – just to have Minecraft. It doesn't matter where you're playing it, who you're playing it with, it's just Minecraft. I can't give you any details about that plan, but that's the ultimate goal. I'll play on my computer, you'll play on your phone. We'll be halfway across the world. It doesn't matter – we'll just play.

I guess the conflict is that you have that ambition, but then you also have the ambition to do exciting new things?
Yes. That is a problem. I think it shows right now of all times because Pocket Edition No more issues, no more confusion, no more conflict. We'll be there.

Any progress on the modding API?
laughs Uhhh, yes. But I can't say what. Again, it's really technical – we have done so much on it. If you look at projects like Forge, for example. A lot of the stuff that they use internally uses the code that we've been working on for years. They're testing all of these new features that we've added into the game. We've done so many complete overhauls of internal systems, it's like: 'OK great, you guys hook it up. It works!' A lot of mods are actually using the internal structures for the API and they don't even realise. They think it's someone else's. But we're constantly evaluating how we can get this out there as soon as we can. But at the same time, how can we get it out there in a good enough way that people will use it and won't have to change everything because we haven't finished restructuring the game first.

Because I think a lot of people are still waiting to update to 1.8 because they're waiting for a modding API and don't want to have to do everything again. How would you answer those worries?
We have actually made a decision recently for PC edition, which is that we're going to stop trying to do huge internal rewrites progressively for 1.9 and probably 1.10. So for 1.9 and 1.10 the only things that change dramatically internally are things that need to be changed. This is a buffer period for mods, so like: 'Oh but if I update to 1.9 then I need to change everything I've done internally. And as soon as I've finished that I've got another update to change everything internally'. So we just decided, let's just slow down. Let's only do the things that are absolutely required. Let's focus on features for a little bit – just try and get that out. And at the same time as the focus on features, we've got other developers. Grum, for example, who are working on the rewrites on a different branch. Not just on PC as well, but we're trying to coordinate the rewrites for Pocket Edition. So those are happening in the background and at some point they will be applied. But we're trying to do it: 'OK so this is going to happen at that point in time so you guys are prepared. You can update to this version safely.' I actually think that mods will have an easy time updating to 1.9 compared to any they've had for the last three or four years. I'm really hopeful that people will take this time to play catch-up.

But as far as the API goes, it's really important to us – not just because it's important to players, but because it'll help a lot with feature parity between the two versions. Can you imagine if we had the same API running on Pocket Edition and PC edition? And Hololens? And then we just make a feature which is a plugin, we just put it in there. That's great! That's the ultimate end-goal. I can't say when that is, but that's the ultimate goal of the API.

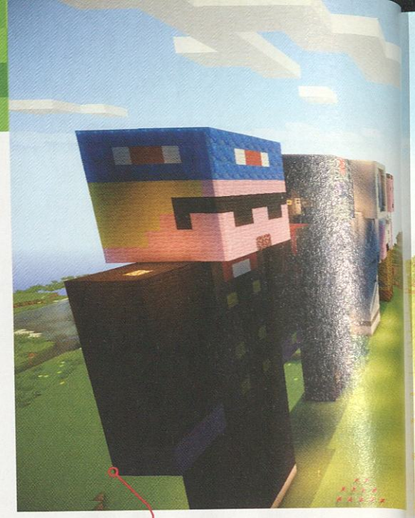
When Notch left, he described a lot of pressure from the fans and how that was a big part of why he left. Do you feel any of that pressure?
laughs That's a difficult question. I think it's kinda the role we take. Because we are so involved with the community, we just put ourselves out there. We're not the Minecraft team – I'm Nathan Adams, I'm Dinnerbone.

We don't have the official Minecraft Twitter: this is where you go for news. We have our own personal Twitter pages and stuff like that. So we're so involved in the community, it opens us up to all of this pressure. It's kinda like asking for it really – it's like: 'hey guys, come at me!'. I do feel the pressure a lot, I don't think I get it nearly as bad as Notch does. I probably don't get it as bad as Jens does because I'm smaller. But I don't know. It's like the task of a public game developer figure is you have to live with this. There are lots of game developers in recent history who did put themselves out there – they did make themselves an open figure where anyone can just talk to them. They weren't hiding behind a company name. Then they just couldn't handle that pressure. That really is a sad situation. We don't want that to happen to us. I don't know, I think we deal with it okay. I think we deal with in our own ways, I guess. That's the only thing I can say to that.

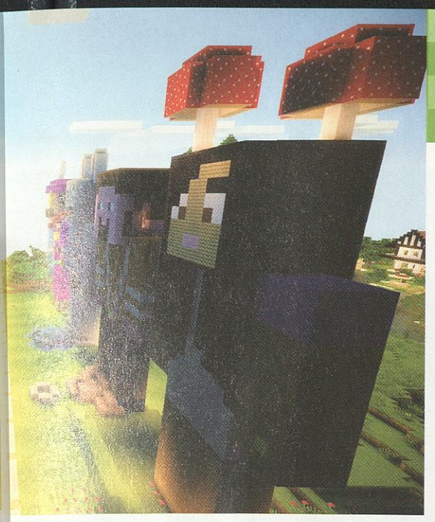
Finally, what are you most proud of, that's you've done with Minecraft personally?
That's a really difficult question, because there's so much I'm proud of. I'd have to say that the thing I'm most proud of as a personal achievement was Bukkit. I created Bukkit with a few others who've actually now joined Mojang with me. That was a thing I made from scratch and then it bloomed into this whole big thing and it spawned its own community. I'd like to imagine that that was part of Minecraft's success, that projects like Bukkit existed. So that was like the really big pride moment of me, that I'd made this, that this is good. I'm happy with this.

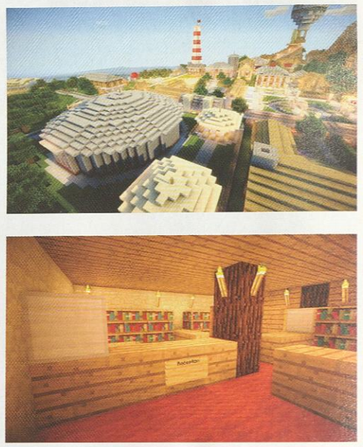
As far as the official Minecraft goes, the thing that I'm most proud of inside Minecraft is that I've probably tackled the most nit-picks that the community has. Small things, like the very first thing I tackled as soon as I joined the Minecraft team was that I re-wrote the chat. Because you couldn't paste in the chat, you couldn't control-backspace, or do a previous message or anything like that. I'm really proud of that, because small stuff like this nobody notices. It's not like: 'Play Minecraft! We have chat!' It's not something you advertise, but it's a small nitpick that people have and I tackled so many of those. So I'm really proud of that, I guess! ■

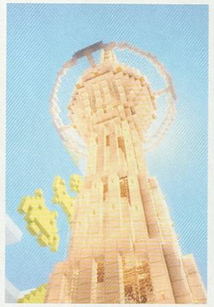
"WE DO NOT PLAN THE FUTURE. WE'LL PLAN OUT ONE UPDATE ONLY."



Hololens is the next step for Minecraft, but these won't fit in our living room







Will we ever see the fabled modding API? It's still a big fat maybe, sadly!

SUNFLOWER PLAINS

If ever there was a biome generated specifically for two lost lovers to bound across before smashing together in a springtime embrace, then it's this one. Flat, and peppered with those titular perennials, these plains are the only place you'll find naturally spawning sunflowers. Alongside dandelions, these can be used to obtain yellow dye.

Don't bother trying to place a sunflower in a plant pot. They're two blocks tall and so, much like peonies and lilacs, won't fit.

While other flowers tend to come across as pixelated messes of colour, sunflowers are easy to recognise, due to their perfectly round shape.

Having trouble finding a use for the humble sunflower? Well know that these yellow chaps will always face east – useful for navigation.

MINECRAFT ACHIEVEMENTS AND TROPHIES

AND HOW TO GET THEM

Be the coolest kid on the blocks with all these delicious achievement points

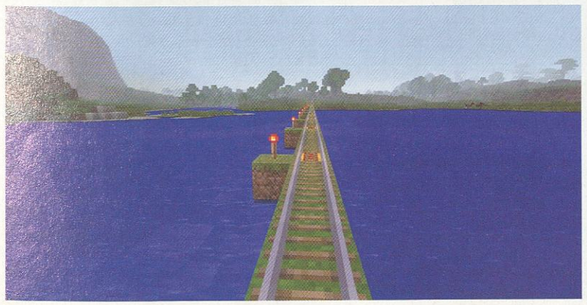
IN THIS new digital age, worth is no longer determined by how many cows you own, the girth of your midriff nor how many ships you've personally thrown wine at. It's all about scores now, whether that's 50 likes, 100 retweets, 50 platinum trophies or 90,000 gamerscore. It's tricky to get all the way up there, because achievements are hard to earn – but Minecraft is an easy place to start. The first few are awarded to you just for going through the basics, like opening your inventory or punching a tree. Several are jokey achievements, like flying a pig off a cliff. And, of course, there are the much, much harder ones that require hours of practice, knowledge and preparation. That's why you're reading this! Whether you're a beginner or you already have a few under your belt, this handy guide will tell you everything you need to know about maxing out your achievements and trophy lists with a few of the most important ones to get.

Travelling 500m or more in a straight line on rails will reap lovely rewards. But do protect your hard work.

ON A RAIL

Worth 40 G on Xbox and a Gold trophy on PlayStation, On A Rail is clearly a tricky achievement to get – probably the trickiest you'll face in the early stages of the game. The requirement is to travel by minecart to a point at least 500m in a straight line from where you started, and it requires the Acquire Hardware achievement to unlock – that's smelting an iron ingot, but you'll be doing that anyway to get the materials. You'll need iron ingots and sticks to make the rails, and gold ingots and redstone if you want to make powered rails – these give your cart momentum, and are vital if you don't have someone to push the cart for you. There are a number of ways to do this: grab a few friends and knuckle down for a couple of hours of mining gold, iron and redstone; find a friend who's already done it and use their track; avoid the complicated redstone circuitry and just get a friend to push you along. Obviously, the second way is quickest, but will you feel any sense of accomplishment afterwards?

Remember that the 500m is measured as the crow flies, but that doesn't mean you can't get creative. If you want to make a cool rollercoaster, go for it – but you might have to use advanced mathematics to work out whether or not it's 500m in a straight line! If you do want to keep it as pure as possible, make sure you've cleared yourself a path – no trees, no hills (or, if you like, tunnel under them) and since it'll take you a while, protect your track with moats, torches, lava or whatever else takes your fancy.



THE LIE

More exciting because of its name than the achievement itself, this Portal reference requires you to make a cake. Obviously. You'll need eggs, sugar, milk and wheat. Eggs come from chickens, even in the Minecraft world, so make yourself a happy little chicken farm in a nice little free-range pen and you'll get one egg every five-to-ten minutes from each chicken.

Wheat seeds are easy to come by, too – breaking grass and using a hoe on grass blocks sometimes gives you a seed, and breaking crops gives you up to three seeds. Hoe the ground and plant them, making sure they are exposed to light and water – water within four blocks will hydrate the land. Sugar is obtained from running sugar canes, found near rivers, through the crafting table, and milk comes from – you guessed it – cows.

Make yourself an empty bucket using three iron ingots, find yourself a cow and press "use" to fill your bucket. Shove your three milks, one egg, two sugar and three wheat into the crafting table and voila! A cake to make GLaDOS herself glow with whatever the homicidal computer version of pride is.

Make sure your cliffs are straight sided or your porcine steed may just climb down.

WHEN PIGS FLY

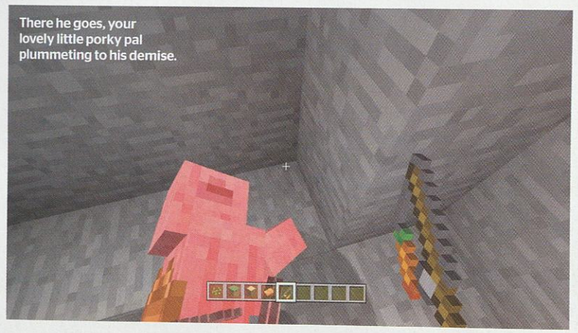
Notch has a sense of humour when it comes to naming some of the achievements in Minecraft. When Pigs Fly is a bit sadistic, too, as it asks you to befriend a pig, put a saddle on him, convince him to ride around with you on his back and then jump him off a cliff to his death. Poor Percy.

You can't craft saddles, unfortunately, but you can find them in chests inside dungeons, mineshafts and temples, or by trading with NPC villagers. Failing that, you can always try catching them with a fishing rod, because someone clearly doesn't value them enough not to throw them into the ocean. Ah, well. Their loss, our gain.

Once you're all saddled up, find yourself a pig, throw the saddle over his bacon – er, back – and climb on board. Of course, if you want to have any influence over his direction, you'll have to craft a carrot on a stick – carrot + fishing rod (which in itself is three sticks + two string). Have this equipped and your piggy friend will follow you – or rather, carry you – anywhere. Even off a cliff. Funny you should say that...

Find yourself a cliff, which ideally should be pretty flat on one side, or the pig might try to climb down rather than freefalling. You don't have to flatten the sides, but just remember that a failed fall means having to climb ALL THE WAY BACK UP, so it's always best to be safe. For you, that is, not the pig.

Once you've got Mr Porksalot up there, it's just about jumping off. He'll take all the fall damage, and you can pick up your saddle and hopefully a couple of pork chops for your trouble. You villain.



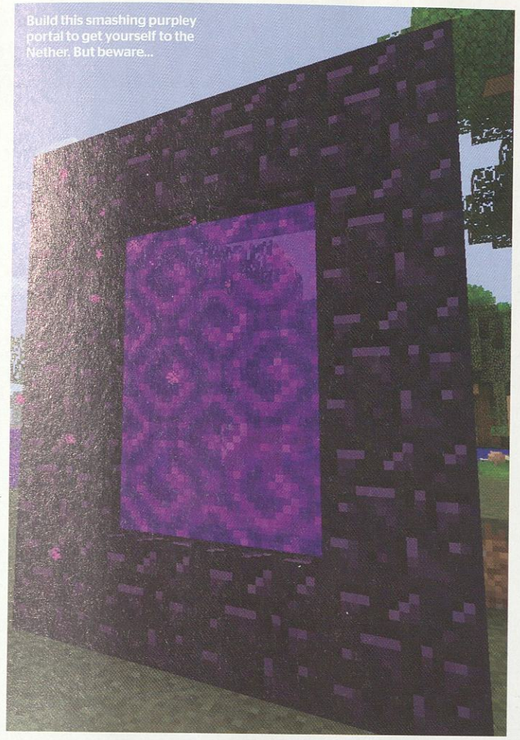
There he goes, your lovely little porky pal plummeting to his demise.

DIAMONDS!

Jules Verne's epic science-fiction adventure novel Journey to the Centre of the Earth is a tale of exploration, discovery and friendship. Nah, just kidding. It's about trying to get the DIAMONDS! achievement in Minecraft.

You'll want to dig quite far down to find any diamond ore, which means being very careful where you dig, because it's not all that useful getting diamonds if you can't get back out. You can use TNT to blast big holes in the ground, or you can find naturally occurring lava or waterfalls that indicate secret caves and tunnels below. Build yourself a nice set of stairs and leave torches along the way to give you an indication of which way you need to go to escape again.

Make sure to take torches, plenty of pickaxes and a crafting table with you, because you'll need to be able to see and mine the diamond ore once you get there. Diamond ore can then be turned into lovely diamonds with the help of a furnace – pop it above any kind of fuel and you'll get yourself a lovely, shiny diamond. Will you turn it into a lovely ring for your girlfriend? Will you just make a cool diamond sword? Hey, we won't judge you.



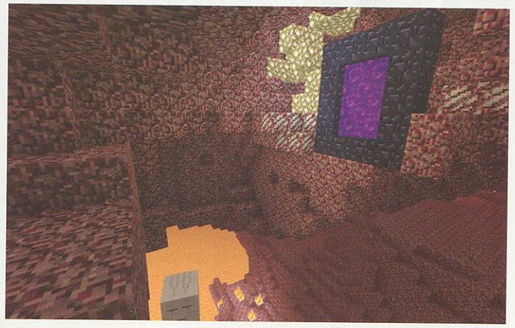
Build this smashing purpley portal to get yourself to the Nether. But beware...

INTO THE NETHER/ WE NEED TO GO DEEPER

This one is another one to file under "time consuming" rather than "difficult". After all, you only need to go into the Nether, not survive it (that's the difficult part). You'll need to acquire a flint and steel, made by combining an iron ingot and a flint, and at least 10 obsidian – a purple and black block that is formed by the meeting of lava and water. It's difficult to come across, and needs a diamond pickaxe to collect, so this one is an achievement for already accomplished Minecraft players.

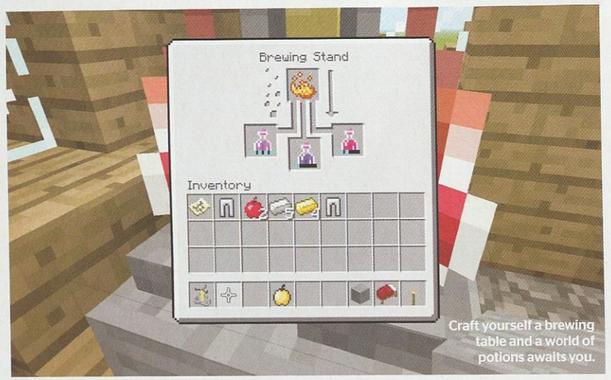
The easiest way to make obsidian is to grab yourself a water bucket and a lava bucket (three iron ingots makes a bucket), make a trench of flowing water – it has to be flowing, not still – and dump your lava into the water. Rinse and repeat until you have the 10 obsidian needed, or 14 obsidian for a slightly nicer looking portal, and build a structure that is 4 blocks wide and 5 high with a 2x3 gap in the middle. If you're building with 10 obsidian, you don't need the corners – saving you time and effort! You're welcome.

Once the frame is built, ignite the blocks on the bottom with your flint and steel and you should see the frame fill up with a swirly purple glow. That's your portal! Step into the glow to transport to the Nether and receive your achievement.



SNIPER DUEL

You don't have to be an amazing shot to get this achievement – killing a skeleton from over 50 metres away – you just have to play smart. First, craft a bow and tons of arrows with string, sticks, flint and feathers. You might want to make a chicken farm for the feathers, kill spiders for the string and mine lots of gravel to get flint, which has a 10% chance of dropping each time. You can also get bows as a drop from killing skeletons – and you only need the one! Next locate a skeleton, usually found at night or in the Nether, and try to trap him in one area with anything that still allows you to see him. Gather up a load of dirt and build yourself a 50-block guideline (or a tunnel, if you're still worried about lining up your shot) and fire a couple of times until he's down. Bear in mind that the arrow's trajectory will drop off towards the end, so you might need a few goes to get the shot just right – and you can always practice on trees, cows and any other animal or object beforehand, as long as you remember to pick up the arrows.



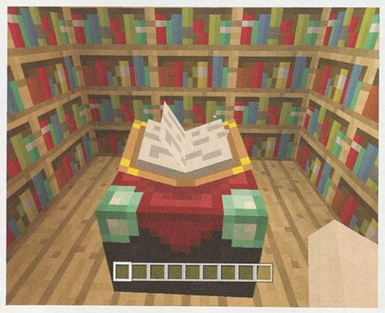
Craft yourself a brewing table and a world of potions awaits you.

LOCAL BREWERY

No beer here, sorry. No ale, either. Or gin. Or moonshine. Nothing that would leave you waking up on a Saturday feeling like someone replaced your eyes with cotton wool and your brain with jelly. It's just potions in Minecraft – although, depending on which one you're making, you could still end up feeling like that...

A brewing stand requires three cobblestone, which is EVERYWHERE, and one blaze rod, which is a little trickier to come by. You'll need a Nether Portal, because you can only find blazes there, but once you're in the Nether, you can't miss them – they're the weird yellow dudes on fire surrounded by yellow hovering sticks. Make sure you have a powerful weapon, because their fireball attack deals 5 damage, and they're hostile on sight – but once killed, they have a chance of dropping a blaze rod. You'll also get the Into Fire achievement for this! Bonus!

Once you've crafted your brewing table – cobblestone along the bottom, blaze rod in the middle – boom! You're in business. Make yourself any potion. You'll need glass bottles, made from sand, water, nether warts from the nether and blaze powder, which you should have gathered from killing all those blazes. Combine those two to make a potion of strength. Alternatively, you could always get this achievement in the tutorial...



ENCHANTER

Still got your diamonds from earlier? Great! You need to have completed that achievement to get this one, and you'll need to do one more while you're at it. Go on, back down the mineshaft, I'll wait.

Oh, and remember all that obsidian we used to make the Nether Portal? You might need that back, too. Four blocks will do it. You've got to go back again? Well do get a move on, we haven't got all day.

And have you ever made a book? No? It's just leather and paper. You get leather from cows, and paper from sugar canes. Come on, come on, hurry up.

Ready? No, really? Okay. Once you've gathered all your materials – which is really the hard part here – you're ready to craft your enchantment table. Open up the crafting menu, place three obsidian along the bottom, one in the middle, a diamond either side and a book on top. POW! A lovely enchantment table for you, which can enchant tools, books and armour, giving them powers like damage reduction, speed, multiplied drops and the chance to set things on fire. Never pass up the opportunity to set things on fire. You'll want to put bookcases around your enchantment table to get the highest level of enchantments possible!

DIAMONDS TO YOU!

You could be the kind of player that sets fire to other people's bases and eats all their cows. You could be the pillaging Viking of the Minecraft world. Or... you could be the kind of lovely person that throws diamonds at strangers like the world's most eccentric philanthropist. All you need is a second player – preferably a friend, if you want your diamonds back – and, obviously, some diamonds.

Throw your hard-earned gemstones at your friend/stranger, have them pick up the diamond, and Bob's your uncle. If you have no friends and can't find a stranger, you can always try to get a mob to pick up the diamond, but that's a bit trickier. And you probably won't get your diamond back. Then again, it's worth 15G on Xbox and a Bronze Trophy on Playstation, so which is more valuable to you? ...Probably the diamond. Don't be silly.

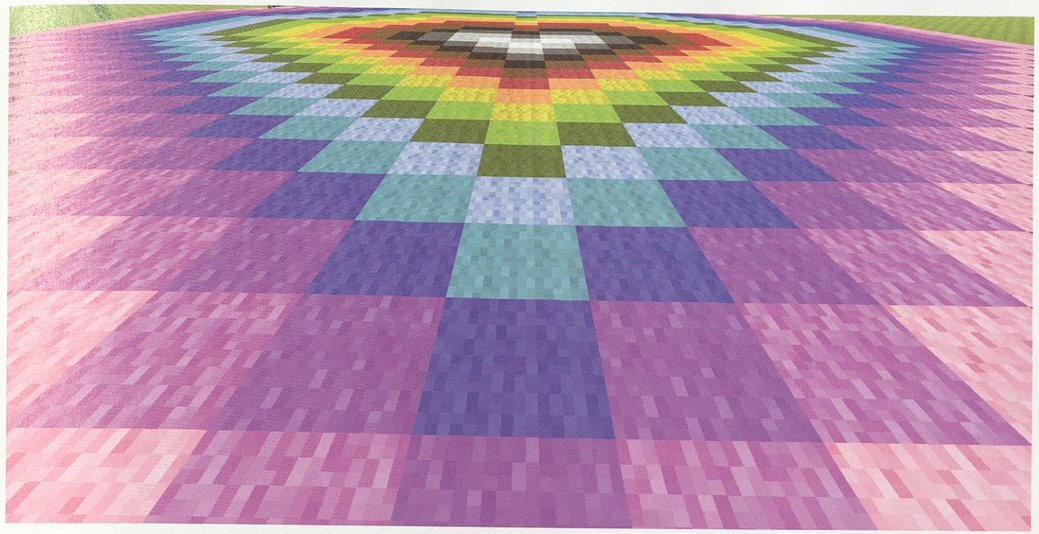
ZOMBIE DOCTOR

Cure a zombie villager. Easy stuff, right? It doesn't even have any other achievement requirements before it unlocks! You could practically do this in your sleep.

...Except you will need a splash potion of weakness, which requires gunpowder (most commonly found on creepers), redstone dust, and a fermented spider's eye (brown mushroom + sugar + spider's eye), which requires a brewing table, which requires a blaze rod, which you can only get in the Nether, which necessitates a Nether Portal... you get the gist. Yeah, doesn't seem so simple now, does it, hot shot. But that's not all...

You'll also need a Golden Apple, which needs eight blocks of gold or gold ingots, and an apple. Apples aren't hard to come by. Gold is.

If you're still up for the challenge, you make yourself the potion and the golden apple, and then find a zombie villager. This means letting a poor, defenceless villager get turned by a zombie, which, let's be honest, makes you a pretty poor doctor. Whatever happened to the Hippocratic Oath? Does that not apply to zombie doctors? Never mind. Chuck the potion at your victim, then cure them with the golden apple. Done. This could all have been avoided if you just did away with the zombie in the first place, really.



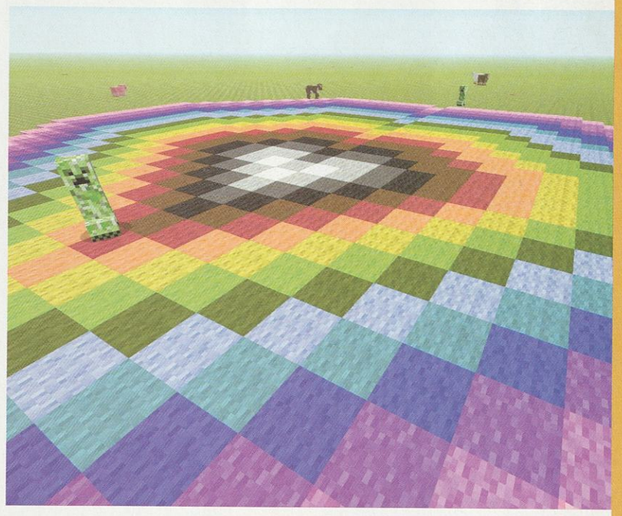
RAINBOW COLLECTION

Collect EVERY COLOUR OF WOOL. If this were a real-world achievement, you could probably just call up your grandma and tell her that you are really looking forward to her Christmas jumpers, and could you perhaps have one of them a bit early. But unfortunately, there are no grandmas in Minecraft – only lonely, wandering sheep. Sigh.

You'll need to get yourself a bunch of wool, obtained by shearing any sheep you happen to come across (shears need two iron ingots to make). The various dyes are sometimes easy to create: rose red needs a red rose, funnily enough, which can be found in most places; dandelion yellow needs a yellow flower.

Ink sacs from squid functions as the black dye, bone meal (made by placing a bone on a crafting grid) is white, and cocoa beans harvested from cocoa plants is brown. Obviously, white, black and brown wool can be collected from sheep, and any coloured wool you come across in the meantime can be stolen for your own nefarious purposes, if you're the kind of felon who nefariously steals wool.

Others are harder to come across. Cactus green is from cactuses, which can only be found in desert biomes, lapis lazuli requires ore from a hard-to-find mineral, and most of the rest are made from flowers in the colour of the dye they make. Actually dying the wool can be done on a crafting table, or you can apply the dye directly to the sheep to make all the other sheep jealous.



CONSOLE WARS

If you're playing the game on Playstation, you could try aiming for a platinum trophy, which you earn by getting all the bronze, silver and gold trophies in the game (29 on PS3 and 46 on PS4). If you're playing on Xbox, you should go for the full 1000 gamerscore on 360 and Xbox One. If you're on PC, you can earn 830 gamerscore on Windows 10. Remember that it's possible to earn achievements on PC if you're playing Creative Mode, but on console versions, it's Survival or nothing. Good luck!

ACHIEVEMENT TREE

Access the achievement screen by going to the main menu and going to the statistics. There, you will find something that looks similar to a skill tree, showing off all the achievements that you have so diligently earned, and those that you have yet to get. The catch is that some of them only unlock after you get others – you can't earn "Getting Wood" until you've earned "Taking Inventory", for example. Refer to this tree often to see what you're missing so you can fill in the gaps. Sorted.

MESA

Incredibly rare, mesa biomes are home to red sand, hardened clay, and stained clay blocks. Stained clay blocks are available in the same 16 colours that wool blocks are, so make a great alternative building material. If you manage to find the even rarer bryce variant mesa biome, then you'll be treated to expansive views of hardened clay spires. These structures are inspired by the real life Bryce Canyon, in Utah, USA.

The mesa biome is, in many ways, quite similar to the desert biome. Of course, this blue stuff isn't helping us to reinforce that claim, is it now?

Dyed clay is a more resistant and reliable crafting material than dyed wool. Also, it won't set on fire when struck by lightning.

Though the stained clay spawning naturally in mesa comes in 16 colours, you'll have to gather some hardened clay to dye yourself should you want to get a specific colour combo.

MINECRAFT

TOP 50 MINECRAFT MOMENTS

From building your first house to Notch leaving Mojang, these are the 50 moments that define Minecraft

50

First time your house gets blown up by a creeper

A nightmare scenario we predict every beginner player has experienced: ooh golly, a creeper! Getting a bit close, isn't he? Uh oh, he's about to explode! Never mind, I'll just escape into my carefully crafted new home, safe and sound. Oh... it's been destroyed. Darn. Still, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger (assuming you still have limbs). Lesson learned: dig a ditch around future dwellings, and surround them with torches.

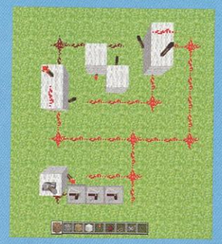
49

Minecraft's many clones

FortressCraft? CraftWorld? Total Miner? The early 2010s saw a slew of eerily familiar block-based sandboxes. Minecraft itself was heavily inspired by Infiniminer, but here the similarities were shameless. The Xbox Live Indie Games marketplace was a haven for these rip-offs. It (mostly) ended when Minecraft was officially released on the Xbox 360, and developers started making DayZ clones instead.

48

Your first redstone circuit



Whether you're creating a trap or using Redstone circuits to trigger complicated events, there's a sense that you're toying with one of Minecraft's most powerful tools. Redstone circuits put the power of game scripting into your hands in a way that feels tactile and satisfying. It's no surprise that the community ran with the idea, using town-sized Redstone circuits to create working computers inside Minecraft.

47

Your first death

Sooner or later, you get a little too adventurous. Maybe you strayed too far from your home base or lost track of the time of day. Maybe you were curious about that glowing orange stuff. Inevitably, your pockets were full of great tools and treasures. Before beds, death was even more awful. Spawning at a fixed point, potentially miles away from where your home was, you had to race back to your items before they disappeared. Argh!

46

First Minecraft spin off – Story Mode

In December 2014, Telltale Games revealed it was working on Minecraft's first spin off. Minecraft: Story Mode takes Notch's sandbox game and turns it into an episodic adventure, much like The Walking Dead and The Wolf Among Us. In a reference to Notch's original name for Minecraft, the story follows a group of characters searching out The Order of the Stone – four legendary adventurers who killed an ender dragon. Also: there's a pet pig called Reuben!

45

Mojang's second game announced

Mojang announced its second game in March, 2011. Scrolls was nothing like Minecraft. Instead, it was a card game where players would build decks of creatures and spells that they'd play against each other. Soon after the game was announced Bethesda sued Mojang, saying people would confuse Scrolls with the Elder Scrolls series. Eventually the companies settled, and in June, 2015 Mojang said it would stop making new content for Scrolls.

44

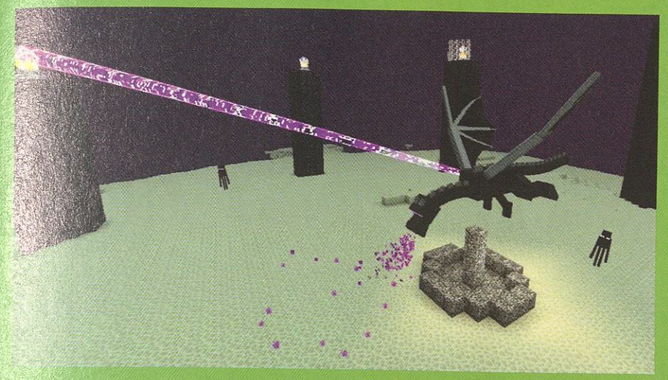
Minecraft: Pocket Edition revealed

The big problem with PCs is their lack of portability. Sure, there are laptops, but they don't exactly fit in your pocket, do they? Enter Minecraft: Pocket Edition, which came to Windows, Android and Apple smartphones in 2011, solving that first-world problem rather nicely. It's a more stripped-down, Creative mode-focused version of the game compared to the original, but still offers a solid brick-breaking fix on the go.

43

Building your first home

Like Westeros, Minecraft's nights are dark and full of terrors, so before too long you'll need to build your first home. We'd suggest carving a cave into a cliff face and then walling yourself in for the night. It won't be big, it won't be pretty, but it will be yours. You can leave a square hole for a window if you want to watch the creepers until sunrise.



42

Reaching The End

Like reaching the nether, creating a path to The End dimension requires you to mess with dark forces. It's bad enough that you have to collect the eyes of the scariest mob in the game: the endermen. Then you have to find and repair a glittering black portal. The sense of menace to the whole quest makes the journey to The End feel like one of the most dangerous undertakings you can attempt in Minecraft. Because, well, it definitely is.

41

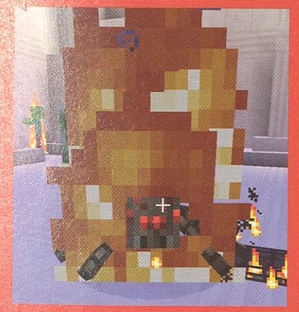
Minecraft EULA announcement

Who'd have thought some updated text could cause such an uproar? As servers started implementing microtransactions, Mojang clarified their stance with an End User License Agreement – a document that ultimately prevented server owners from charging for game-altering perks. The backlash from the resulting confusion led to Notch tweeting: "Anyone want to buy my share of Mojang so I can move on with my life?" We all know how that ended.

40

The arrival of adventure maps

After wowing us with their amazing creations, Minecraft mapmakers realised they could even create their own custom quests. Before Mojang added official support for Adventure Mode and command blocks, adventure maps worked on an honour system. A list of rules told you what you could and couldn't do – and usually asked you to not remove any blocks. Some even featured a story, told through separate text files downloaded alongside the map.



39

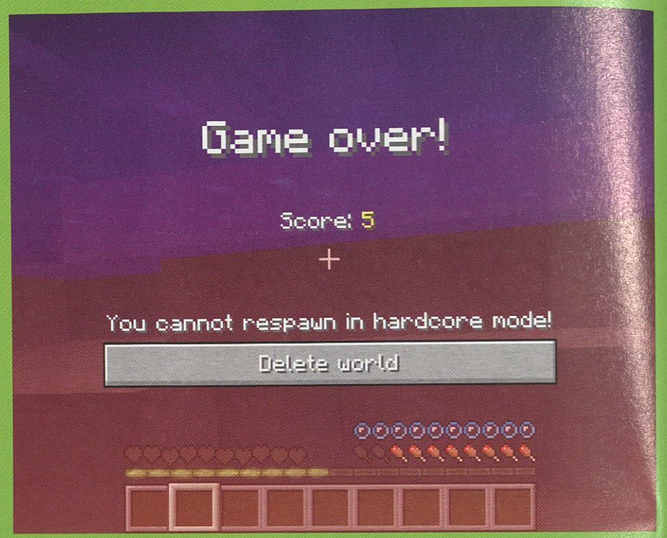
Killing the ender dragon

Notch teased the idea of adding a dragon to Minecraft for some time before the horrifying ender dragon finally appeared. The monster gave Minecraft the crescendo moment it was lacking, and now few can forget the fear of seeing its huge dark form for the first time. The boss fight was a work-in-progress for a while after release, but its ability to smash blocks made it a fearsome opponent. It's due to become even more fearsome in future updates.

38

Rob McElhenney announced as the director for the upcoming Minecraft movie

Following the success of The LEGO Movie, Warner Brothers bought the film rights to Minecraft, which recently resurfaced after a few years in limbo. The fact there's a movie in the works isn't a surprise, but the news that Rob McElhenney is directing is. McElhenney's best known for It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia, an excellent but very adult comedy series. However, less well known is that McElhenney is already making Figment, the film which got him the Minecraft gig.



37

Hardcore mode introduced

Fancy something harder than hard mode? My, aren't you a glutton for punishment? Say hello to hardcore mode, which sets itself apart with the fact that when you die, you won't respawn. In fact, your game world will be deleted. Oh, and if you get a bit nervy part way into a game and change your mind, bad luck: you can't switch the difficulty back. Introduced in the first beta release, back in November 2011, this is a stern challenge only for the bravest adventurers.

36

Breeding animals

Sure, you can brew potions and enchant weapons, but nothing in Minecraft makes you feel as much like Frankenstein as breeding animals. Just get two of the same species beside one another and feed them both at the same time. They'll both get little hearts above their heads (no 'my friend fancies your friend' subtlety here) and reproduce, spawning an itty bitty baby animal. Ah, the miracle of life.

35

Herobrine Creepypasta created

Have you ever been building on a private server in Minecraft and had the sudden sensation that you're not alone? It was only a matter of time before ghost stories started circulating online. The Creepypasta wiki preserves Minecraft's most famous one: a tale of a blank-eyed Minecraft man that lingers in the fog, stalking players and building strange totems. It started as a myth, but there are now several mods that add Herobrine to Minecraft for real.

34

Minecraft: Volume Alpha soundtrack is released

While you're busy gallivanting through the jungle biome, it's easy to forget that half the ambience is a result of what's going into your earholes. But stop to think about it, and C418's gentle electronica is the perfect accompaniment to your blocky fun. The soundtrack, Volume Alpha, received a digital release back in 2011, but was also given a physical release – including a limited-edition run on transparent green vinyl – in August of this year.

33

Development of Cave Game

Cave Game was the very first Minecraft prototype. Inspired by a blocky resource-gathering game called Infiniminer, Notch coded an early build that could generate surface terrain and deep, twisty mines. It was released onto the internet for free after less than two weeks of development. At the time there were only two block types: grass and stone, and no mobs, mining or building. You can see an early build of Cave Game on YouTube here: http://bit.ly/1wIFNw3

32

Minecraft comes to consoles

Minecraft may have been available on PC in early guises since 2009, but its first console incarnation didn't appear until 9 May, 2012, when it came to Xbox Live Arcade – bringing with it splitscreen multiplayer, a smaller map and simpler crafting, all perfect for sofa-snug gaming sessions. The game finally hit PS3 in December 2013, and new-gen versions of Minecraft on Xbox One and PS4 came along in September 2014.

ARCADE

31

Minecraft reaches 100 million registered users

On 25 February 2014, Notch tweeted to announce that Minecraft had reached a staggering 100 million users, adding that 14 million of those players had paid for the full version. The figure is a testament to Minecraft's global appeal, and cements Minecraft's place as one of the biggest games in the world today. Even more amazingly, Minecraft's playerbase has only grown since, and more than 20 million players have bought the game at the time of writing.

30

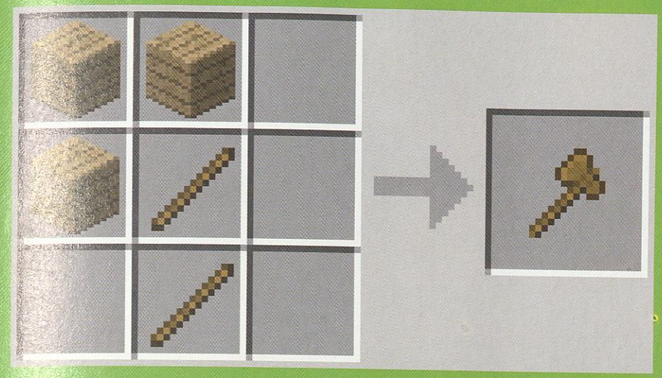
Baking your first cake

Baking your first cake in Minecraft is less about nutritional value and more about the gesture. "No mere hunks of charred meat here!" it says. "I've managed to get my hands on *sugar* and everything. Welcome to my lovely home!" This isn't survival: this is making both your mum and Mary Berry proud. Look at you, welcoming guests in a traditional fashion! Give yourself a pat on the back.

29

Minecraft Classic changes with the times

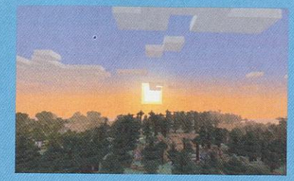
The first version of Minecraft, now referred to as Minecraft Classic, arrived back in 2009. It contained an early version of survival mode, featuring now-defunct features such as the ability to earn points for killing mobs. Classic was phased out years later, as survival mode improved and creative mode was added. Classic is now remembered as the moment Minecraft decided what sort of game it wanted to be.



28

Crafting your first tools

Whether you first opt for a pick, a shovel or an axe, your first set of tools is what separates Minecraft man from Minecraft mob. Sure, they're probably made of wood and will give you godawful splinters when you use them, but anything's better than grinding your fingers down to bloody nubs by clawing away at trees and stone walls, right? Primitive man would be so proud of you. You've made it!



27

Official Minecraft trailer passes 100 million views

"Let's go to a place where everything is made of blocks, where the only limit is your imagination." The first few lines of the official Minecraft trailer captures the magic of the game perfectly, so it's no surprise it's received more than 120 million views on YouTube. The magic of Minecraft is that its appeal is instantly understandable. When you see the castle that trailer-guy has built, you immediately want to join in.

26

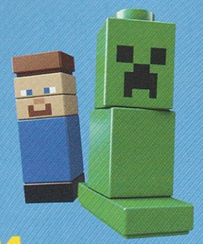
Taming a wolf

Unless your name is Mowgli (and in which case, your parents really were *cruel*), wolves aren't inclined to be too friendly to you. Unless, that is, you tame them. Feed a wolf a bone and there's a one in three chance that it will become your faithful friend, and attack your foes – making you feel like the veritable king of the blocky jungle. It's how we originally invented dogs, you know.

25

New-gen versions of Minecraft released

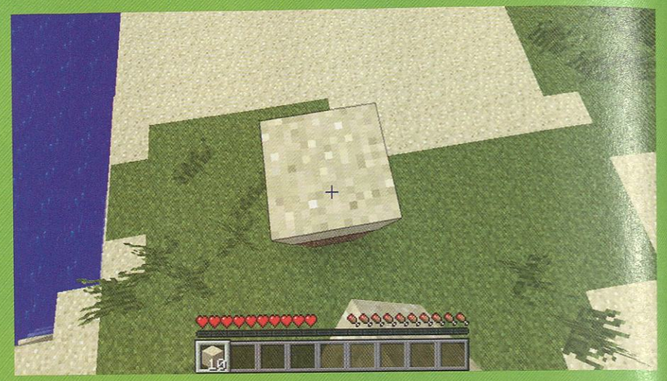
Minecraft scaled beautifully to the demands of phones and iPads, but its 2014 release on PlayStation 4 and Xbox One gave it the power of a new generation of hardware to play with. Split-screen multiplayer introduced an excellent new way to play the game, while simplified crafting mechanics and improved tutorials improved the new-player experience dramatically. You even get a map when you spawn in to stop you from getting immediately lost. Handy!



24

First LEGO Minecraft set

Minecraft and LEGO were always meant to be together, and that became obvious when Mojang submitted the idea to LEGO's Cuusoo pitch service. The prototype received so many votes that the LEGO website struggled with the load. Sure enough, the final sets were soon approved, and now there are sets that let you build forts in different biomes, and a plastic replica of the ender dragon that's far too cute to be scary.



23

Your first nerd pole

Need a beacon to guide you home after an adventurous jaunt out into the world? That's why you need a nerd pole, my friend – and your first one marks your debut as a serious explorer (no, we don't get the name, either). Put simply, it's a really, really tall pile of blocks: just keep jumping and placing a new block under your feet each time. If you want to keep it, it's best to make it two blocks wide, mind, else you're going to have no way of digging back down to earth.

22

First diamond pickaxe

You can spend hours, even days, searching for your first diamond ore block. But it's worth the effort, as when you've finally harvested enough you can craft a diamond pick. Your first experience with the glimmering tool is a revelation. It digs through materials at lightning speed, and seems to last forever. Even better, it allows you to extract the obsidian needed to reach the nether – a trip that will inevitably convince you to build a diamond sword as well.

21

Minecraft on stage at Gamescom

Up until August 2013, Minecraft was exclusive to PC and Xbox. Then Sony's Gamescom conference happened. Sony announcing that it had secured Minecraft as a launch title for PS4 was a huge show of faith for an indie title (albeit a hyper-popular one), not to mention a massive coup in stealing that exclusivity from the green team. At the same time, Notch confirmed on Twitter that Minecraft would be coming to PS3 and PS Vita.

20

Hololens demo

Welcome to the future. This was Microsoft's message at E3 2015 when it used Minecraft to show off the capabilities of its HoloLens augmented-reality headset – and it's well worth watching on YouTube. This is Minecraft spread across the surfaces of your living room's three dimensions, ready for you to interact with using your hands rather than a mouse or a controller. We'd like it now, please. It's nearly our birthday!

19

Surviving the first night

When the sun sets on your first day in Minecraft you'll discover just how dark Notch's game can be. Creepers, zombies and spiders will prey on you till the dawn comes to burn them away. The best way to survive, if you've not already built a house, is to dig yourself into a hole in the ground and build a dirt roof over your head. The alternative is to climb as high as you can and hope the AI avoids you. It can only get better from here, right?

18

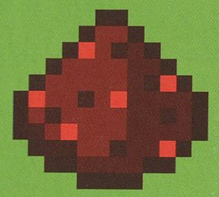
First Minecraft mods

Believe it or not, installing Minecraft mods was once even more of a hassle than it is today. The mods were simpler, too. Instead of complex modpacks full of tools, blocks and machines, they were small tweaks and additions to improve the then limited game. From obsidian tools, to boats that could float on lava – all were signs of the Minecraft community's creativity. Some, such as pistons, proved so good that they were added into the game itself.

17

Entering the nether

The Minecraft alpha 1.2 Halloween update brought a molten underworld to Minecraft. Notch introduced this burning hellscape as a means of fast travel – one step in the nether is the equivalent of eight overground – but really it was a new level of challenge. The unique blocks and treasure hidden in the underworld made it a tempting target for raiders, but the underworld fortresses hid hordes of enemies, and it's all-too-easy to fall into the lakes of lava.



16

Redstone update

The Redstone update introduced a series of blocks that increased the complexity of the builds you could make in Minecraft. Daylight sensors, weighted pressure plates, trapped chests and more inventive blocks allowed for increasingly ambitious Redstone circuits. This in turn gave adventure map makers more powerful tools to work with. Many of the best puzzle and adventure maps in Minecraft today would have been impossible without the Redstone update.

15

Multiplayer mode

For the first month or so of Minecraft's development, solo was the only way to play. Classic version 0.0.16a added exploration with others in June 2009. Alpha 1.0.15 launched survival multiplayer servers in August 2010, but it wasn't until the release of the Xbox 360 Edition in 2012 that split screen multiplayer became available – perfect for shrieking at endermen with someone to hold your hand.

13

First online servers

One of the best things about Minecraft is the ability to hop into, explore and contribute to other people's worlds thanks to the game's use of player-hosted servers. The first of these, of course, was Notch's own – but now popular servers attract hundreds of players at a time. The world record for the most people in a Minecraft world at one time is 2,622, a feat organised by the Yogscast.

12

Horse update

Raising animals on a farm is one of the most relaxing things you can do in Minecraft. The Horse update completed the ranch dream by adding horses and donkeys that you could tame and ride. Suddenly you could find saddles and even armour for your steeds, and patrol your territory in a manner befitting a successful adventurer. You could even lasso friendly creatures and tie them to fences with leads.

TOP 50 MINECRAFT MOMENTS

14

Default female character introduced

Steve is great! Practical, dependable chap that he is, he's your proxy in the game world, doing all the work for you. Except, he doesn't represent 50% of the world's population. Meet Alex, AKA the red-ponytailed lady Steve. Introduced as an option on PC in September 2014 and on console in April 2015, she's the female default character, and every bit as badass as her blocky brother.

11

Update that changed the world

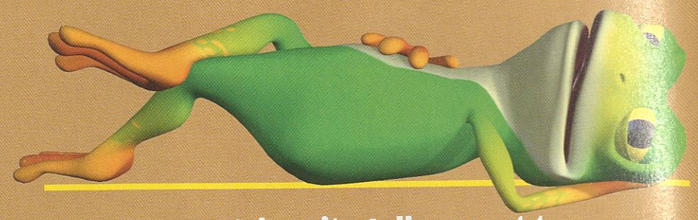
It's easy to take the variety of Minecraft's worlds for granted now, but before the 1.7.2 update, things were much plainer. The so-called "update that changed the world" added 11 new biomes, from savannah areas to deep oceans, roofed forests and extreme hills. New animals, effects and blocks helped to broaden the game's scope, making each procedurally generated world even more special.

10

Minecraft PC passes to Beta development stage

Minecraft entered beta at the end of 2010, starting a period of development that added huge features to every aspect of the game. In beta, survival mechanics were expanded to include food and starvation, critical hits were added to combat, and you could gain experience for fighting monsters. New lighting systems and new graphical effects were added, beds let you skip night-time and reset your spawn point. Even the sunsets were overhauled to be weepier.

For all the advances to the survival game, perhaps the most notable addition to the beta was creative mode. Players formerly used earlier versions of Minecraft to pursue major building projects. The adventure update added a devoted way to play that removed health bars and let players go wild. Soon enough we were exploring 1:1 replicas of the Starship Enterprise and visiting servers full of glorious player-made cities.



9

Notch quits Jalbum.net to work on Minecraft full time

In the early days of Minecraft's development, before it was clear the game would be a success, Notch was working at a photo gallery software company: Jalbum.net. He'd committed to Minecraft already by giving up his full-time job at King.com, the mobile game studio. King had wanted its staff to stop making games in their spare time and Notch, rather than give up on Minecraft, had left the company.

Notch was only working two days a week at Jalbum, but it gave him security. Later, it also acted as a tether to the outside world: the job prevented him "from becoming a total shut-in," Notch said in an interview at the time.

However, after nine months at Jalbum.net it was clear Minecraft was a success, and Notch was earning far more from the game then he was from his salary. It was time to commit fully to his fast-growing game. Notch didn't leave alone, though. Carl Manneh, Jalbum's CEO quit, too, and came to work for Notch as Mojang's CEO.

It's a bit more basic than the game we're used to, but it's clearly Minecraft

8

First demo released on TIGSource

On 17 May, 2009, 04:24:07 AM, Notch posted the first demo of what would become Minecraft. It was version 0.11a and was the barest essentials of the sprawling sandbox we know today. You could explore a procedurally generating landscape and you could break up blocks with your hands. That was enough, though. Players could dig down into the vast subterranean caverns that littered the world. They could harvest blocks and replace them – building bridges, stairs, and, in the earliest examples of Minecraft art, make Mario sculptures.

Within 24 hours the thread had spawned more than three pages of responses. Features were suggested, criticism was offered, and screenshots were shared. It was a telling microcosm of what Minecraft's future would be.

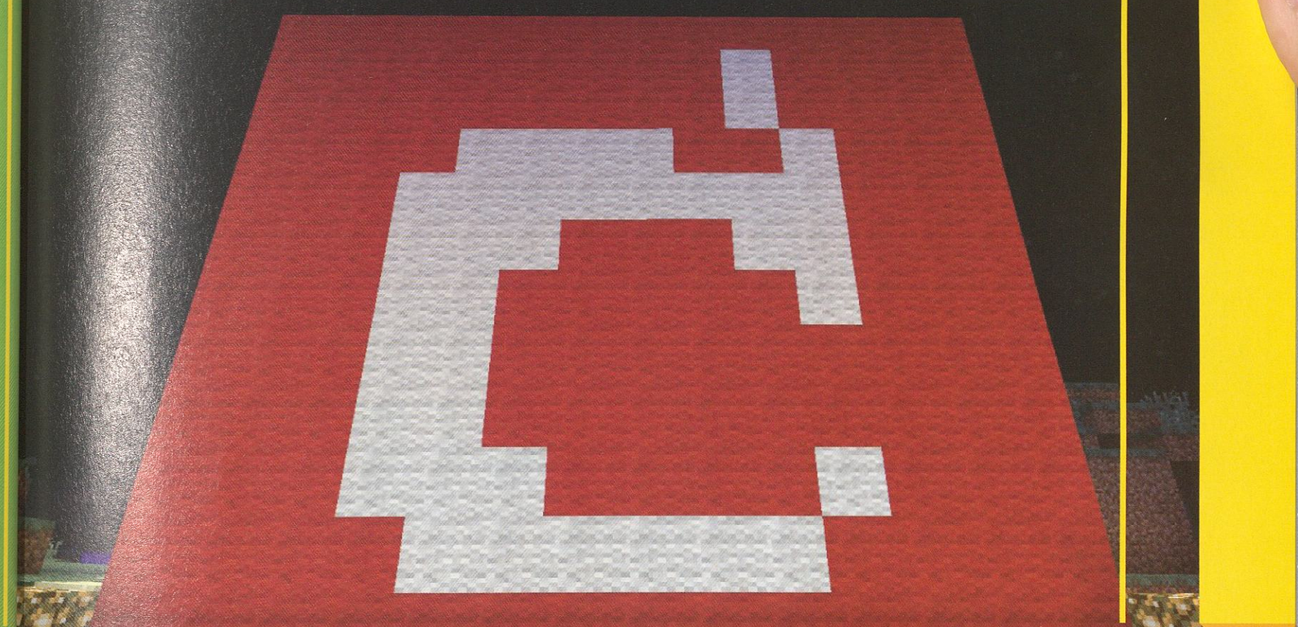
Soon after the success of this first alpha, Notch began supporting Minecraft with weekly updates, which he funded by charging a small fee. Sales trickled in at first but soon, exploded to thousands of sales a day. Humble origins for the world's biggest game.

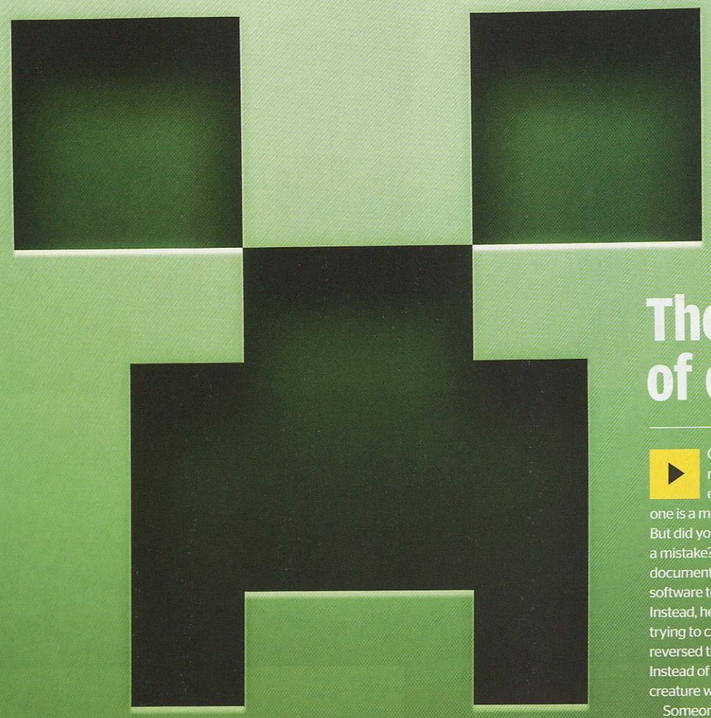
The Mojang team rocking some snazzy creeper shirts, before Markus Persson, Carl Manneh and Jakob Porsér left.

7

Mojang AB is founded

If you want something done properly, do it yourself, they say. Markus 'Notch' Persson and Jakob Porsér clearly listened well to whoever 'they' are, setting up Mojang Specifications (now Mojang AB) in May 2009. The two had been friends for years, and soon brought in chum Carl Manneh as CEO. While the Stockholm-based company started out small, it now employs around 50 staff – and had racked up revenues of $80 million even by early 2012. That's got to be one in the eye for every mum who said videogames wouldn't get you anywhere, hasn't it? Although the studio's second game, the card-based strategy title Scrolls, received fairly positive reviews, it was nowhere near the runaway success of Minecraft, and development has since been stopped. Mojang is also set to act as the publisher for Oxeye Game Studio's sidescroller Cobalt in October. Alas, it doesn't appear to have blocks in it.





6

The creation of creepers

Creepers are inarguably Minecraft's most iconic mob, and we've already established that being blown up by one is a memorable moment in its own right. But did you know that they were originally a mistake? As revealed in the Minecraft documentary, Notch didn't use modelling software to create Minecraft's creatures. Instead, he just wrote them in code. While trying to create a pig, he accidentally reversed the values for length and height. Instead of short and long, the resulting creature was tall and thin with four tiny feet.

Someone else might have fixed the error. Notch decided to go with it. He made them green, gave them a sad, mournful face, and packed them full of explosives. These failed pigs became creepers – a mysterious, implacable threat in a game that, up until that time, had only the more traditionally monstrous zombies and skeletons. Creepers were the first sign that Minecraft's world was full of weird wonders.

Hiding among the cacti! That's a sneaky trick, even for creepers...

5

First ever Minecon

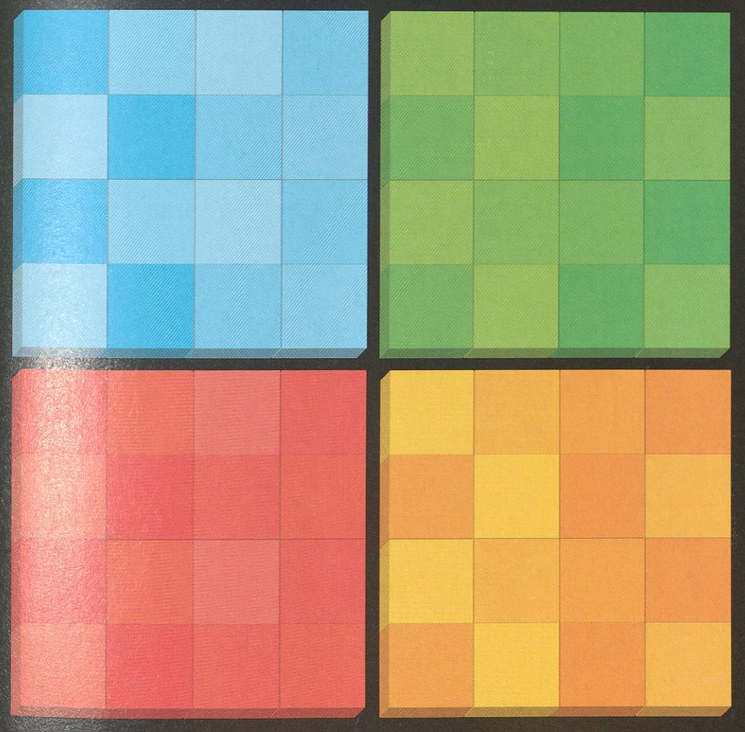
Minecon debuted in 2010 as MinecraftCon in Bellevue, Washington. Unlike the big Vegas and Disneyland events that would follow, this first gathering was a small, informal affair. Visitors faced off over in-game rounds of Spleef – a race to destroy the blocks under your opponent before they can do the same to you – and threw a building competition, while Notch wandered around, meeting fans. The growth of Minecon from this humble starting point reflects Minecraft's explosion into mainstream popularity over the course of just a few years.

The first conference to take on the Minecon moniker properly was set a year later in Las Vegas in 2011. Thousands attended from all over the world to see Notch announce the release of Minecraft. Visitors absorbed talks from members of the dev team and popular YouTube celebrities, and competed in costume competitions. The whole thing culminated in the Nether Party, featuring a set from DJ Deadmau5.

4

First Minecraft video on YouTube

Minecraft and YouTube go together like jelly and ice cream, or creepers and unprotected houses. Videos of the blocky wonderland have totalled 63 billion views – that's nearly ten views for *every single person* on this planet. Including your granny, and we all know how clueless she is about technology. But it wasn't always like this. The first ever YouTube video of Minecraft came before Minecraft was even Minecraft. Posted by Notch in May 2009, it's a demo of, "an Infiniminer clone I'm working on", and simply shows a cave (youtube.com/watch?v=F9t3FREAZ-k&feature=plcp). Ah, such innocence. But in December 2010, the Yogscast (at the time a little-known, largely WoW channel) started a series of Minecraft let's-plays. The Yogscast is now a media empire employing more than 30 people, with millions of subscribers and hundreds of thousands of views per video. Oh, and they make just a few of the countless YouTube videos about Minecraft. Do the maths.



3

Microsoft buyout

On 15 September 2014, Microsoft paid $2.5 billion to buy Mojang and take control of Minecraft's future. At first, it seemed incredible anyone would want to pay that much for a game, even one as popular as Minecraft. However, with plans for a movie, merch, and new releases, it's clear Microsoft will make its money back.

Since the buyout, Minecraft's been worked into Microsoft's major gaming announcements. At E3 2015, Microsoft's augmented reality headset, the Hololens, was shown off with a Minecraft demo. When Windows 10 launched, a beta version of Minecraft exclusive to the OS was released, too, and it was free to anyone who already owned the game on PC.

In the year since the buyout, Mojang founders Notch, Jakob Porsér, and Carl Manneh all left the company, and Mojang's other game, Scrolls, was cancelled. Mojang has become the Minecraft company.

2

Official version of Minecraft released

Minecraft 1.0 was officially released on 18 November, 2011 during Minecon. Notch announced the launch on stage during his keynote address. The grand 1.0 update added The End dimension, new nether bricks, achievements, a hardcore mode, villagers, mushrooms and more. Animal breeding, potions and improved armour helped rebalance the game, and the 1.0 release fixed a bunch of bugs.

The release was a climactic moment, and the result of two-and-a-half years of busy development. However, the launch was only another landmark in Minecraft's rapid and continuing journey.

With a stable platform it would be able to expand onto new consoles, and continue to grow with new biomes, monsters and adventures over the course of the next three years. In the current client you can change your version of Minecraft to earlier iterations, which is useful if you ever want to take a nostalgic trip through the game's history – which we would heartily recommend.

It's almost impossible to imagine the world before Minecraft

1

Notch leaves Mojang

It started with a cold. In June, 2014, while laid up in bed with the flu, Notch started to receive angry messages on Twitter – a lot of angry messages. Minecraft players were annoyed about changes to the game's EULA and how servers were monetised. Changes, Notch says, he had nothing to do with. It was the last straw.

The anger directed at him for something he wasn't part of forced Notch to realise he didn't have the connection to his fans he thought he had. He didn't like it.

Notch reached out to Microsoft and began work on a deal that would let him leave Mojang. By the end of 2014, he was gone.

"I don't want to be a symbol, responsible for something huge that I don't understand, that I don't want to work on, that keeps coming back to me," Notch wrote in September, 2014. "I'm not an entrepreneur. I'm not a CEO. I'm a nerdy computer programmer who likes to have opinions on Twitter." Minecraft remains as popular as ever, but it'll never be the same without Notch.

STONE BEACH

Obviously a prime source of sand, and therefore glass, Beaches also come in rarer stone or gravel forms. With sand beaches you can generally find sandstone when digging far enough down. In incredibly rare seeds you'll find exposed dungeons here, too. Be careful when digging deeper on gravel beaches as you might fall straight down into dungeons or mineshafts hidden below.

Beaches are another useful location for wannabe fishermen.

Farm cactus on sand in order to craft yourself green dye.

Sand is actually an essential crafting material throughout all stages of play, whether you're building glass or TNT.

MY MINECRAFT SURVIVAL DIARY

A tale of fruity heartbreak and many, many deaths

Survival mode is a really interesting thing when it comes to Minecraft. It separates those who just want to build rollercoasters and castles from those who want to test their limits and challenge Mother Nature. If you venture into the everything's-out-to-get-you world of survival mode you have to be prepared for a number of things, especially if you're used to creative mode. Firstly, everything wants to kill you. You won't be able to come within a certain distance of hostile mobs without being their next target, and you definitely won't be able to go out at night without a pretty good weapon or a great deal of luck. You can't fly, you have to gather all your materials yourself, and you get hungry – so be prepared to kill quite a few animals. Survival mode is not for the faint-hearted. Your first steps in surviving will always be the same: punch trees, craft tools, build a shelter, punch more trees, repeat. Best of all, every experience is different. That's why we sent out our intrepid explorer, armed with nothing more than a diary and gusto, to experience survival mode first hand. Learn from her mistakes, people...

1 Final Destination

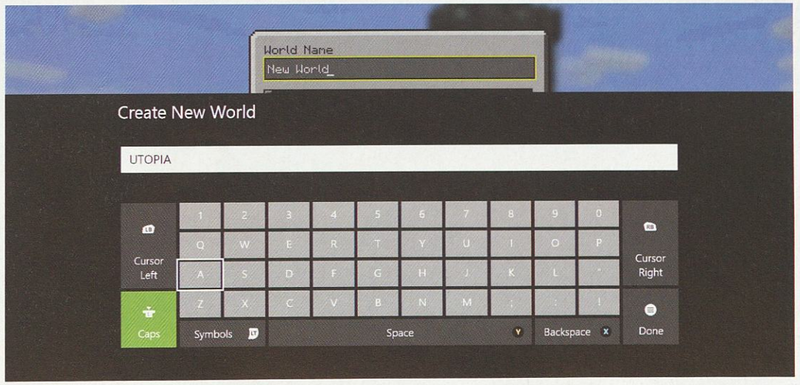
Most people go on gap years or backpacking holidays to "find themselves". But you know what they normally find? They find that they've spent all their money and then they have to come home to stupid boring grey wherever and find a job to make up for all the cash spent on funny hats and aftersun. Not me! I've only got £30 to my name and I'm spending it on a survival holiday in Minecraft,

"I'M SPENDING MY MONEY ON A MINECRAFT HOLIDAY"

because I'm SMART. It's probably going to be nice and relaxing, and even if it's not, I can just pause and come back later. You can't pause real life, as my mum always used to say.

2 Gravel New World

Here goes! I called my new home 'UTOPIA', because nothing ever goes wrong in a place that's designed to be perfect. I also ramped the difficulty up to 'Normal', because easy is for wimps and Bear Grylls. And we're in! After spawning inside a dense forest, I decided to head to the treetops to survey the area and pick somewhere to set up a shelter. But it's all... desert. Just lots and lots of desert, as far as the eye can see. Not a great start.

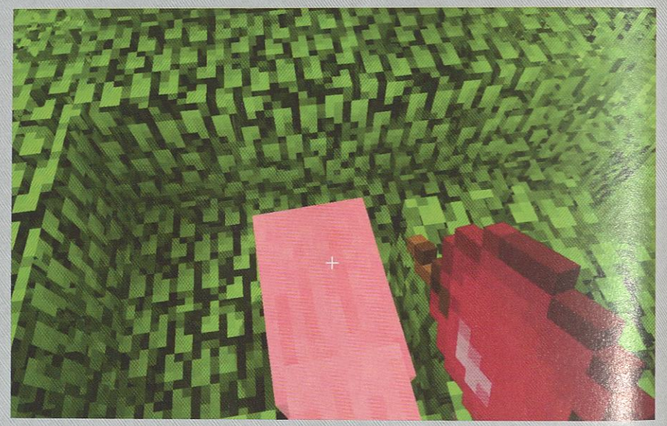


3 Apple Crumble

I can't build my house on sand – there's a whole Bible story about why that's a bad idea. I might as well build my house out of gingerbread and put up a sign that says: "do not eat, please". Anyway, I found myself

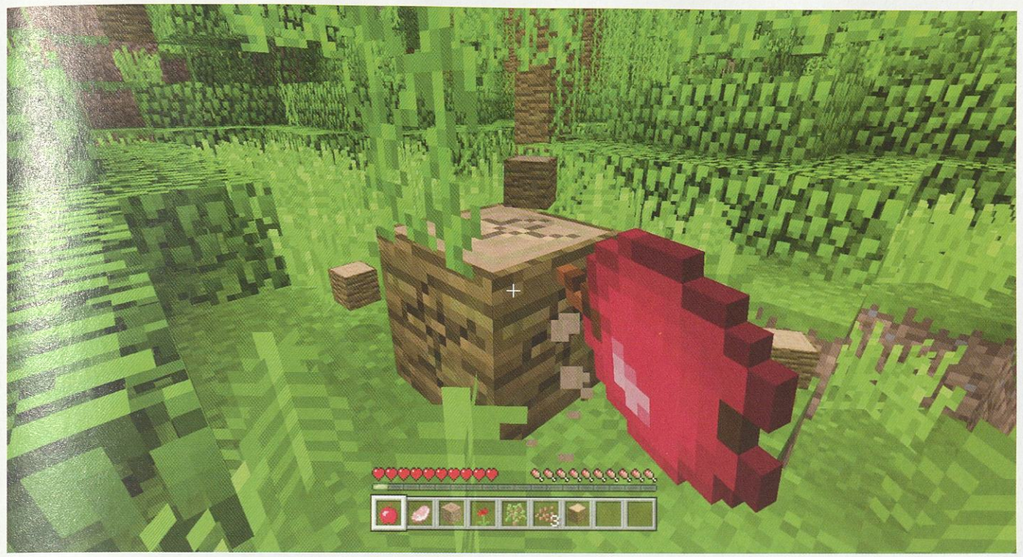
"I KILLED A PIG WITH MY APPLE IN A CRUEL TWIST OF FOOD IRONY"

an apple and set off into the forest. It was just like a novel, I thought – one girl and her apple, on an exciting adventure. I killed a pig with my apple in a cruel twist of food irony. I chopped down some trees with my apple. What need do I have for axes and chain saws when I have my trusty apple? Literally none.



4 Craft Work

Apple and I set off into the desert, where we found a mysterious floating block. Where did it come from? What did it mean? For now, nothing, because I couldn't eat it or make things out of it, so ONWARDS. It wasn't long until we stumbled across a village, nestled in the heart of the desert like an oasis, but with beds and shelter instead of water. I built myself a chest and a crafting table out of my gathered wood and set off again to check out the surrounding area with my HANDY MAP (spoilers: handy map doesn't last very long).



5 Undead Bitemare

As soon as night fell, the zombies descended upon the village. My poor housemates – well, I say housemates, I basically just stole their houses, but whatever – were trembling in fear as the zombies pounded on their door all night long. I didn't have enough wool to craft a bed, so I had to stay awake with them, watching all manner of creepy things approach the window. They couldn't get to me – but that didn't make it not scary. In my desperation, I ate Apple. We all have to make sacrifices.

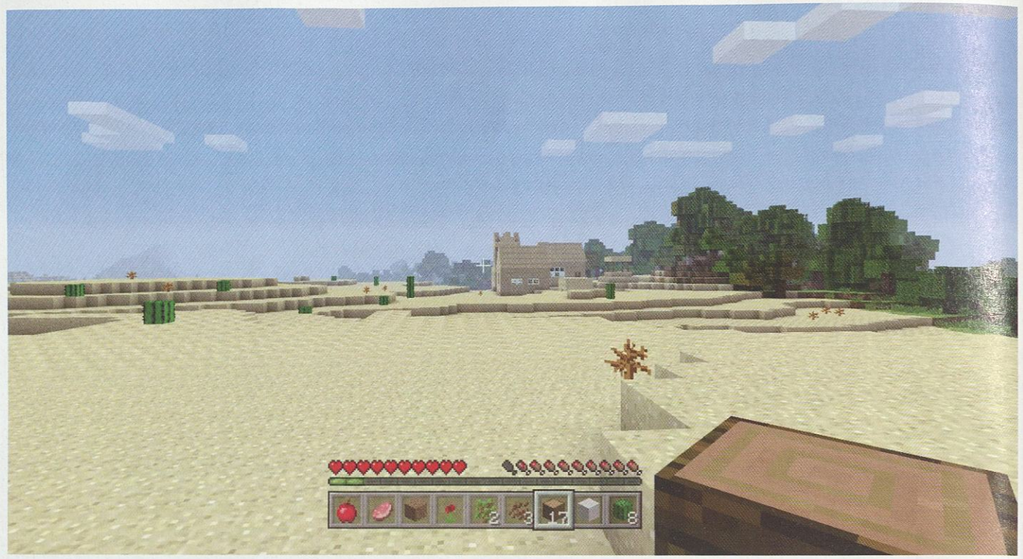
6 In Too Sheep

When sunrise started to creep above the horizon, I went out to find some wool so I didn't have to spend another night rocking in the corner. I made it about 10 steps out of the house... and got blown up by a creeper. And because I hadn't set my respawn point – the bed, remember? – I was kicked back to the forest without any of my collected gear. Found some wool just lying around, but realised that it was probably a good indication of some kind of sheepy serial killer. Ah, well. As long as I get my bed.

7 Cave Story

The village was lovely, but it was time for a house of my own. I built this one in a cave, because caves are safe (no) and caves offer natural light (also, no). I didn't have the materials for torches, so I just had to live in the dark. This is what survival is like, kids.

Long story short, I went out to find coal, left it too late, got stranded in the dark and had to build a tower where I stayed for another long night of fear, but I GOT THE COAL, and my little house was now becoming a home, furnished in literal sweat and tears.



8 Ill Behaviour

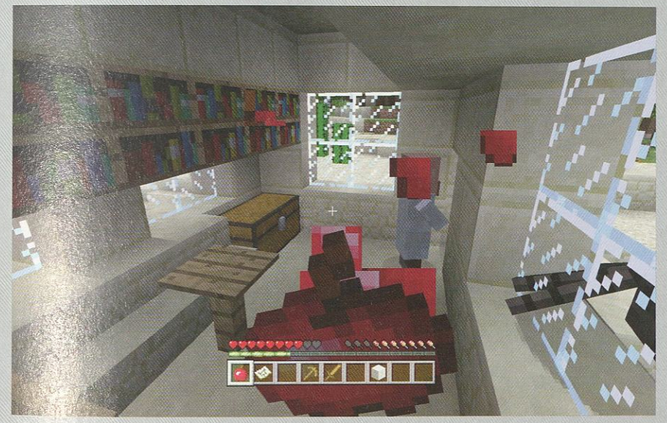
Just look at all the things I have now! Coal to make torches, leather to make armour, and rotten flesh to make me throw up! I ate all the rotten flesh because I forgot to get any food. It tasted like pork. Really bad pork. But it did give me the energy to go and mine some stone to make stronger weapons! I started to think back to the days when I had Apple. Poor, delicious Apple. Such innocent times...

9 Pole Position

My idyllic new lifestyle didn't last long. I went outside the next morning to check my post (which was pointless, since I didn't have a postbox, nor friends who might send me post) and I was greeted with a rather unpleasant sight – another creeper, back to avenge the death of that other creeper that killed me by killing itself. I snuck around the back and built myself a tall tower so that if the creeper killed me, and I ended up being booted back to somewhere else, I could at least attempt to find my way home. I have learnt from my mistakes (read: deaths).

10 Making Bacon

I collected some stone and some coal, went back to my base, built a furnace and set about making all that gross raw meat in my pockets into delicious grilled protein, ready to fuel my next foray into the wilderness. But meat on its own is just fuel – meat and veg is a meal. And so I decided to take my next step in my journey – settling in and making myself a cute little farm by planting some wheat seeds I'd found. Wheat = bread, and bread + meat = bacon sandwich – the true sign of advanced civilisation.



11 Urine Trouble

Is this survival? I think so. I haven't had to drink my own urine, I haven't had to wrestle a bear, and I haven't once slept inside the carcass of a camel. I'm pretty sure this is what success looks like. I just wish Apple was here to see it. My next step is to make my cute little house into a proper home, with bookshelves and lamps and maybe even a second floor. It might not seem much, but I built this place with my bare, blocky hand-stumps, and that means so much more than my glossy creative mode mansions.

12 Growing Pains

After a while, my crops started to grow. So cute! So nutritious! Now I just needed to continue with the slog of gathering materials: sugar cane to make paper, which I could use to make another map; coal, iron and stone

"MY CHEST WAS FILLING UP NICELY AND I HADN'T DIED IN AGES"

to make meals and weapons for killing stuff and then eating it afterwards. My chest was filling up nicely, and I hadn't died in ages. By this point, I felt pretty confident in my survival skills (ignoring all the previous deaths, but we're not talking about those. Shhh!).

PLATEAU

This visually striking environment is an iconic upgrade of the hills biome, only with each hill boasting a flat bit at the top. Perfect for when you're after a location for a hilltop fort, a skull-shaped castle in the side of a mountain, or for building an easily spottable home base. You will have to devise a way to scale the sharp incline, though...

Plateaus are most impressive when they are found hybridised with mesa or savanna biomes.

Mesa plateaus can occasionally have each hill separated by swathes of flat wasteland. These can be tough to navigate and to keep an eye on.

If you plan on building atop a plateau, better build a ladder or some steps to help you when getting up and down. Or, if you're pro, craft yourself a working minecart escalator.

FEAR IS THE MINE KILLER

The top 10 scariest moments in Minecraft

Minecraft is a frightening game. Some people might associate it with snug treehouses, cheery sunsets and chickens, but not us.

Nope. We're constantly aware of the slick, looming grasp of nightfall: the shadowy caverns full of monsters. When the sun goes down, Minecraft's world becomes a nightmare of scampering spiders and groaning zombies.

With Halloween shambling towards us like a hungry ghoul, now feels like the perfect time to collate Minecraft's most knee-knocking moments. Consider it a form of therapy.

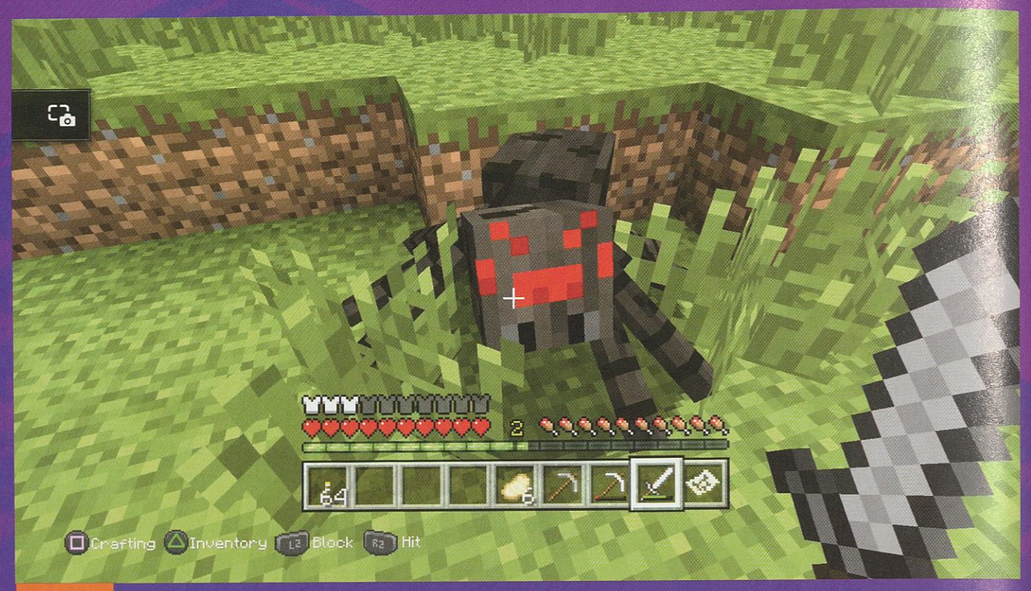
By forcing ourselves to closely examine the things we're most scared of, we'll heroically conquer our fears. Instead of spending the day digging protective moats, we can step outside and enjoy the sunshine. Maybe we'll even become brave enough to go to bed without wearing diamond armour. Or maybe, all of this research will remind us how right we were to be afraid in the first place. Light your torches, grasp your sword and let us venture together into the dark...

1 BONE AND ARROW

Let's start with a simple one. A simple one that's nevertheless scarier than a clown shoe full of scorpions. You've ventured underground – like a fool – into Minecraft's dank, cold foundations. You can see a black cavern in front of you. Wisely, you decide to leave this foul place and head upwards to the sun, and safety. But it's too late. The monsters are coming. You hear the 'twang!' of a bowstring, and the thump of an arrow embedding in your blocky flesh. The dry, grinning face of a skeleton slides out of the shadows, murderous thoughts rattling around in the dusty space where a brain used to be. You run, but can't remember how you got here. You're alone, underground, and... oh cripes we've made ourselves scared just writing about this.

2 CREEPERS BE CREEPIN'

It's an evening like any other. The sun is fading in the sky, so you pop outside your house, say goodnight to the Cuthbert the sheep, and survey your surroundings. It is a good life. You retire to bed with a mug of cocoa – except that there's no cocoa in Minecraft but let's pretend there is – and dream of successful crops and diamond mines. Dawn comes, and you approach your front door. There's a face. A face at your door. A horrible, grumpy creeper face, peering into your perfect home, ready to blow it up if you even think about getting outside. Sure, you could smash out a back wall, and escape that way, but this is your home! You've been awake three seconds, and the day is already ruined.



3 EIGHT LEGGED FREAKS

In real life, spiders are our friends and perform important functions, such as eating pests and feeding bigger, less-frightening animals like birds. In Minecraft, however, they represent unrefined, crawling evil. Like real-life spiders, they're not too bad when encountered during the day, but at night they go hunting for human. Worst of all, their unholy stickiness means that they can scale your house and sneak in through any gaps you might accidentally have left. With spiders, it's not about what you can *see*, but what you know: outside every cosy home is a nest of arachnids, a writhing, hissing mass of eight-legged horror, waiting to suck the juices from your cuboid body. The only solution is to burn your house down, just to make sure. Burn everything. Fire makes the nightmares go away.

4 HISSY FIT

Some moments on this list are slow, creeping horrors: the gradual realisation that there's a zombie at the end of your bed, or that fact you're lost underground with no way out. This entry is different. This one is about the last thing you hear before you die.

Picture this: you've left it too late to get back to your house. The sun is going down. You're sprinting through a mine as daylight diminishes, like ripe fruit beginning to rot. Almost there! You can see the welcoming flicker of torches. You're reaching the edge of the cavern, when you hear it: a sharp, chilling hiss, signalling your imminent departure from this world. You don't even see the creeper responsible, but it doesn't matter. You have enough time to know you're doomed, but not enough to escape...

5 ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

There's something about zombies that's particularly chilling. Perhaps because they force us to confront our own mortality, reminding us how fleeting and precious life is. Or perhaps it's just because they're green and icky and bang on our doors at night. The first time you hear them groaning outside your house is properly nasty. Sometimes an entire village can fall prey to undead invasion, turning benign villagers into flesh-hungry ghouls. People you knew and probably burgled are reduced to mindless, shuffling horrors. You can use golden apples or potions to restore them, but it's complicated. A quicker, more cost-effect cure is to hit them with pickaxes until they're no longer dead, undead or anything in between. Job done!

ANTI HEROBRINE

Herobrine isn't in Minecraft. Notch confirmed it. There's nothing in the source code. He can't exist unless you mod the game (something we cover in our mods feature on page 70), and the stories about him are nothing more than elaborate fan-fiction. There's nothing to be afraid of, but there's still something about those milky white eyes that makes us uncomfortable. When you're playing Minecraft, alone, at night, there's often something...*wrong*. Like you're being watched by an unseen force, lurking malevolently in some hidden place, intent on doing you harm. Minecraft can be a lonely, bleak game sometimes – especially when you're mining deep underground or are engrossed in building a masterpiece. It's these moments, when you feel truly isolated, that the idea of Herobrine suddenly feels worryingly real. Wait a minute, what was that noise...? Brrrrr...

6

"THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THOSE MILKY WHITE EYES THAT MAKES US UNCOMFORTABLE"

NETHER AGAIN

We establish below that the nether is hell, and that ghasts are horrific, but it gets much worse. Everything here is more hostile. Soon you'll be craving the simple, familiar horror of moaning zombies and creepers. At least they're sort-of organic, right? Even the lava here is aggressive, moving further and faster than in the overworld. You can kiss goodbye to water, too: bring a bucket with you and you'll end up with nothing more than steam and an empty pail. Even your compass won't work, and your map just shows sad brown static. This all-encompassing, cloying sense of being lost in a hostile world really gets the fear glands trembling. Worst of all, if you put a bed down it'll burst into flames. Ghasts, pigmen and lava we can deal with, but not sleeping? That really is hell.

7

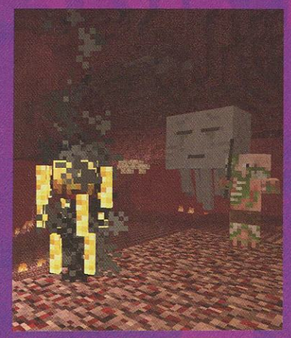
"EVEN THE LAVA HERE IS AGGRESSIVE, MOVING FURTHER AND FASTER THAN IN THE OVERWORLD"

8 ENDER DAYS

What could be worse than hell? Nothing. No, no, we mean that The End is actually *like* nothing, and it's worse than the nether. Much, much worse. There's something cold, bleak and numbing about The End. Just being here feels wrong. Everything that was wrong about the nether is just as wrong in The End – compasses, bed and maps all won't work. But in the nether, you at least have a way back (unless a pesky ghast blows up your portal). In The End, your only way out is to die – which is a pain and far too easy – or to defeat the ender dragon, which is the hardest thing to do in Minecraft. Throw in an army of sinister endermen and you have the single most frightening area in the game. Truly, the stuff of nightmares.

9 GHAST MINUTE

You've not taken your first trip to the nether, which is scary enough on its own – see above if you don't believe us. You're basically in hell – you can't sleep, and you're miles away from the leafy green solace of the overworld. But it gets worse. You hear a distant screaming – somewhere between a kicked cat and a mewling infant. It's a ghast – a huge, bloated, floating monstrosity – which attacks you with horribly powerful fireballs. Worst of all, it's incredibly hard to hit without ranged weaponry. The first instinct is to run, to turn tail and sprint back through the portal to safety. But then, disaster: an explosive fireball slams into your escape route, trapping you in hell with these screaming horrors. You should never have come here, and now you can never leave. Oh woe.



10 NIGHT SHIFT

Okay, this one is silly, but we've all been there: delicately climbing high structures or crossing sickeningly high ravines before you learn that crouching will stop you from falling off. We remember edging around precarious towers, or crossing slim, rocky gangways, terrified that the next step would send us plummeting to a shin-splintering death – or worse still, a lava bath that would burn our precious goodies along with us. It probably doesn't help that heights give us the collywobbles anyway or, perhaps more likely, it's the falling and dying we have a problem with. Whatever the answer, we spent a good few weeks (years?) avoiding anywhere with an edge, just in case we bumbled off it. Imagine how relieved we were when we found the shift key! Wait, you *always* knew that? Now we feel stupid.

Use an axe to take down these big 'shrooms. Don't forget to replant any harvested mushrooms. You can use bone meal to grow them big again.

Mycelium grows on dirt like grass, but is better for growing mushrooms. You can't till this stuff for farming normally, so bring some dirt blocks with you for a base.

Before you start shearing mooshrooms for their red mushrooms, remember that once they've been shorn they'll turn into regular old cows. Better to milk them (using a bowl) to get mushroom soup!

MUSHROOM

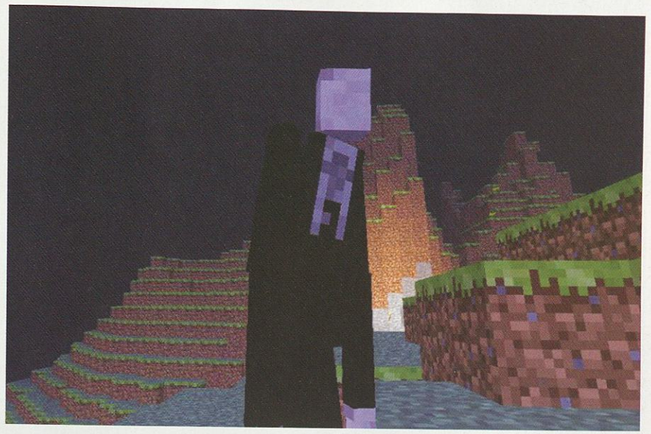
It's not just the prospect of shroomy soup to cook up that makes the discovery of a mushroom biome a good thing. Hostile mobs won't spawn here, even underground or at night, so this is an ideal place to build a base. You will need to bring your own livestock and seeds for farming, though. Mushroom biomes are always found near the ocean, often as isolated islands. Build a big home and invite friends to become a real fun guy...

31 BEST HALLOWEEN MINECRAFT MODS

Bring black magic and terrifying monsters to Minecraft...

It's the season for a good scare. The skies are getting darker, the streets are getting colder, so it's time to bring that chill to Minecraft with this selection of twisted downloads. Some of these mods retexture the game to give it a spookier, more menacing atmosphere, others add self-contained adventure maps full of jump scares set in sinister locations. There are even mods that let you build portals to dimensions full of hideous new monsters to fight and weird new ores to mine. Others, like the brilliant Lycanite collection, fill your world with beautiful and deadly creatures.

All of these mods are designed to make Minecraft a spookier place to explore. There are some delectable haunted house scenarios, of course, but some of the best mods on the list offer a more subtle brand of horror. If you dare, you can step into the shoes of a witch and broker deals with demons in Witchery. Alternatively, craft a wand and learn the esoteric arts of magic in Thaumcraft. The subtle occult overtones and corrupting effects of magic make for a surprisingly scary experience. One thing's for sure, once you've encountered dark magic, Minecraft will never be the same again.



SLENDERMAN

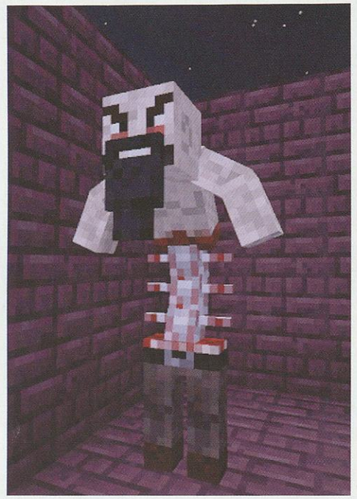
www.bit.ly/1JeloEL

Slenderman is perhaps the scariest videogame villain ever invented. The spindly, sharp-suited nightmare attacks from behind, but stands completely still if you look at him, creating some horrifying stand-offs. The mod adds Slenderman as a mob, but there's also a save file that you can use to replay a scenario based on the original Slender game.

WEEPING ANGELS

www.bit.ly/1hl8wHb

These freakish stone statues behave a lot like Slenderman, but are great if you want to add a dose of Doctor Who to your Minecraft world. The weeping angels don't seem to kill you right away. Instead they prefer to stalk you through the world extinguishing lights, which is actually worse.



RESIDENT EVIL

www.bit.ly/1p6p9lO

The adorable Wesker skin makes this worth an instant download, but there's so much more to enjoy, especially if you're a fan of Capcom's Resident Evil games. Expect creepy versions of the licker, zombie dogs and boss enemies like the relentless Nemesis. If you take a hit you can craft herbs to heal up in authentic Resident Evil style.

MUTANT CREATURES

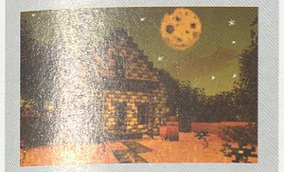
www.bit.ly/1Kt9UON

This mod gives your favourite Minecraft mobs a scary twist. Zombies, pigs, skellies and creepers all get new attacks, but the Enderman is the star of the show. His mutant variation can throw blocks and even clone itself. Luckily Mutant Creatures gives you a way to fight back, in the form of the mysterious Chemical X. Throw it at enemies to bring them on-side.

JOHN

www.bit.ly/1JOTlcU

You can't miss this towering, toothy beast. The mod adds instances of John to your Minecraft world. He's big, tough, and enthusiastically chases you if you're unlucky enough to get too close. If you're clever enough to kill him, however, he'll drop an immortality gem that lets you craft the immortal blade.



JOLICRAFT SPOOKY HALLOWEEN TEXTURE PACK

www.bit.ly/1MvFwYn

The most authentic Halloween texture pack out there, Jolicraft's skins evoke the earthy orange tones of a pre-carved pumpkin. A creepy orange moon, orange wheat fields and grim stone textures create a much scarier atmosphere than their typical texture packs, which are normally dedicated to making Minecraft a cheerier place.

THE ORPHANAGE

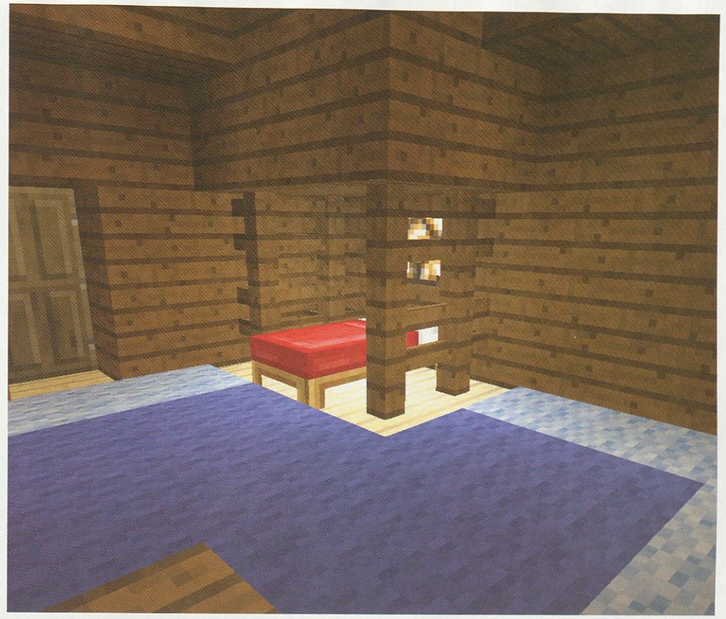
www.bit.ly/1svEz6M

Your car has broken down and the only shelter you can find is a huge abandoned orphanage. It's not one of those nice orphanages that looks after children, it's one of the creepy abandoned ones full of terrifying noises and murals painted in blood. You might want to just stay in the car.

THE MONASTERY

www.bit.ly/1pmrzBg

"You will not see the light again." That's the reassuring opening message of The Monastery, a scary and incredibly dark adventure map that has you exploring the bowels of some abandoned catacombs. The Silent Hill texture pack gives this map its gritty, creepy tone.



GRIEF

www.bit.ly/1Cy5qFS

You know things are about to get bad when all of the lights go out in your building and you have to venture into the basement to fix the fusebox. Worse, you've just watched a news report asking residents to stay indoors because of a mysterious 'event'. Brace yourself for some serious jump scares.

CREEPYPASTACRAFT

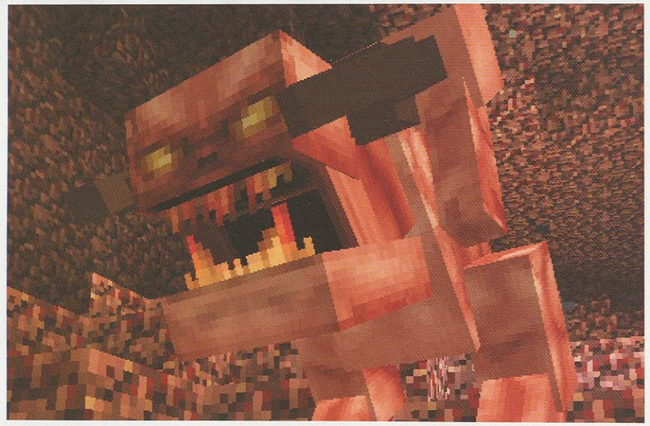
www.bit.ly/1gTxhcI

CreepyPasta are short horror stories posted on the internet. They've inspired a Minecraft mod that puts some sinister CreepyPasta characters into your world. Fiends include the spindly Rake, and Eyeless Jack, who lives in forests and teleports to sleeping players. Not all of them are evil. Jane the Killer won't attack you, but look out for her evil companion, Jeff, who is a relentless murderer.

HEROBRINE

www.bit.ly/1hl8Eqb

Dare you build Herobrine's totem and summon Minecraft's most famous demon into your world? This sinister, blank-eyed version of Minecraft Steve will hunt you all over your world, leaving a trail of chaos and destruction in his wake. He likes to hide explosive deathtraps throughout the landscape, and can even summons torrents of lava to keep you on edge.



LYCANITE'S MOBS

www.bit.ly/1wNvW8b

This fantastic creature pack adds dozens of beasts designed to add more varied threats to Minecraft's biomes. Burrowing sand snakes hide in the desert, beautiful feathered lizards live in the jungle, and look out for the sinister grue if you're burrowing into dark underground passages. Some creatures can be tamed, if you're careful. Want to risk it...?

HARDCORE DARKNESS

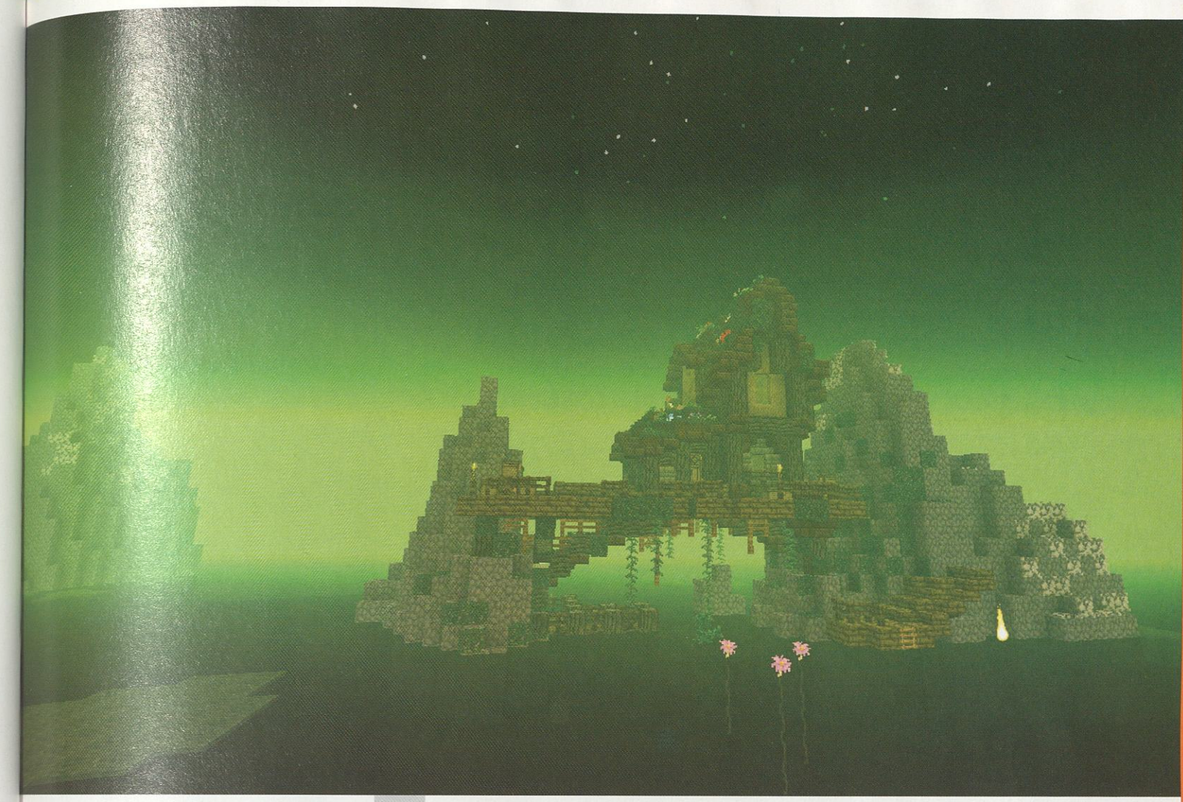
www.bit.ly/1IJRYnp

This simple but effective mod does naught but add darkness to Minecraft. True darkness, that is. You may not notice the low ambient light that helps you through Minecraft's deepest caves until it's gone, so always carry a torch.

SPECIAL AI

www.bit.ly/1gTxpci

What if Minecraft's monsters learned to ride other monsters? That is the dilemma you will face should you install the Special AI mod, which gives the game's denizens new behaviours to contend with. Enemies will smash light sources and attack with greater vigour, making your normal Minecraft survival experience that much scarier.



THE PRISON

www.bit.ly/1KtacoM

Brave the gangways of this dark and very haunted old prison at your peril. Thunder, lightning, strange light displays and distracting sounds are only just the beginning in an exploration map that mixes perfectly-pitched jump scares with an unshakable eeriness.

BETWEENLAND

www.bit.ly/1RohUnS

Tar beasts, sporelings, silt crabs and dark druids are just a few of the threats you have to contend with in this strange swampy extra dimension. Look out for some druids guarding a strange altar in the overworld, and defeat them to gain access to Betweenland.

THE HALLOWEEN MOD

www.bit.ly/1NCtewb

Get into the Halloween spirit by getting cursed by a witch in this fully-featured ode to Halloween. As well as witches, look out for jumpkins: jumping pumpkins that attack when you get too close. You can collect candy and craft it into mega-candy to heal up, but mind you don't get too distracted and miss the approach of an invincible halloween creeper.

THE DOLL MAKER

www.bit.ly/1IZwGQI

Would you like to have nightmares full of grinning doll faces peering at you from the dark? If you do, you crazy freak, just install the Doll Maker adventure map and enjoy a nice cold sweat as you investigate the Doll Maker's dungeon. Be sure to install the accompanying resource pack to get all the textures and scary sounds. Why would you do this to yourself?

SPECIMEN XX121

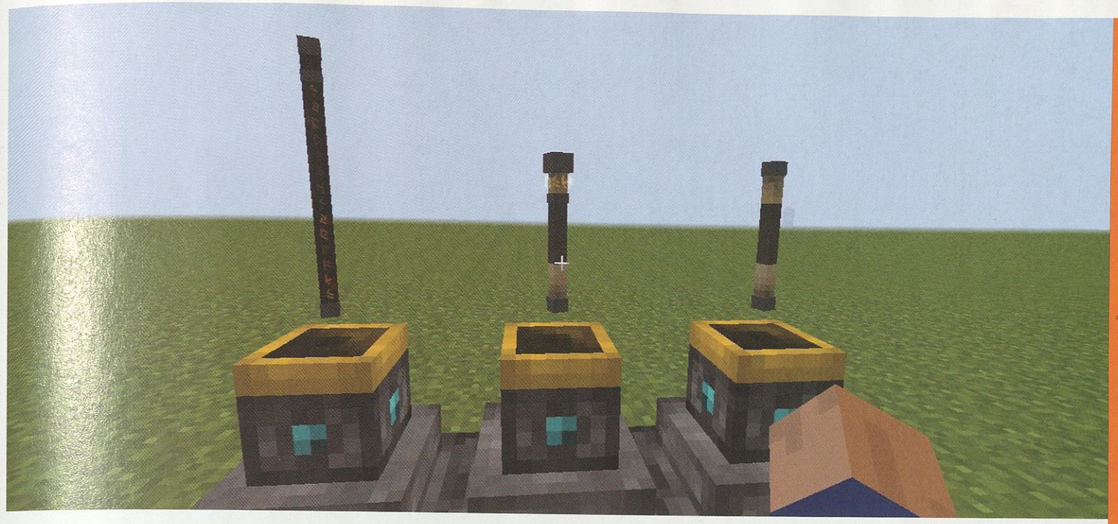
www.bit.ly/1K3qau6

A rare science-fiction horror map that strands you on a spaceship after a terrible accident. Everyone is dead, and you'll soon find out why as you move through the metallic corridors. Vents and closets provide good hiding spots, but don't rely too much on the useless spears you find littered around.

ASPHYXIOUS RESOURCE PACK

www.bit.ly/1E2NuH7

Asphyxious imagines that the world of Minecraft has aged and started to sink into decrepitude. The flowers are frayed. The grass has grown dull and pumpkins suddenly look a lot more evil than they used to. Creatures have had a makeover as well. Keep an eye out for the excellent skeletal horses.



HARDCORE ENDER EXPANSION

www.bit.ly/1HyN6LT

The creator of this mod wanted to add more challenge to The End dimension by creating bigger islands with new biomes, enemies, bosses and traps to navigate. The introductory baby ender dragon boss fight sets the tone in an extremely challenging mod that requires the highest level gear to face.

ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

www.bit.ly/1gTxyw8

Bring a friend and charge headlong into a city full of zombies. Customised monsters, unique items and sidequests offer some neat distractions from the carnage, but the theme here is zombies: zombies exploding out of the walls; zombies charging off rooftops; zombies falling before your gunfire and manic weapon-waving. Zombies.

THAUMCRAFT

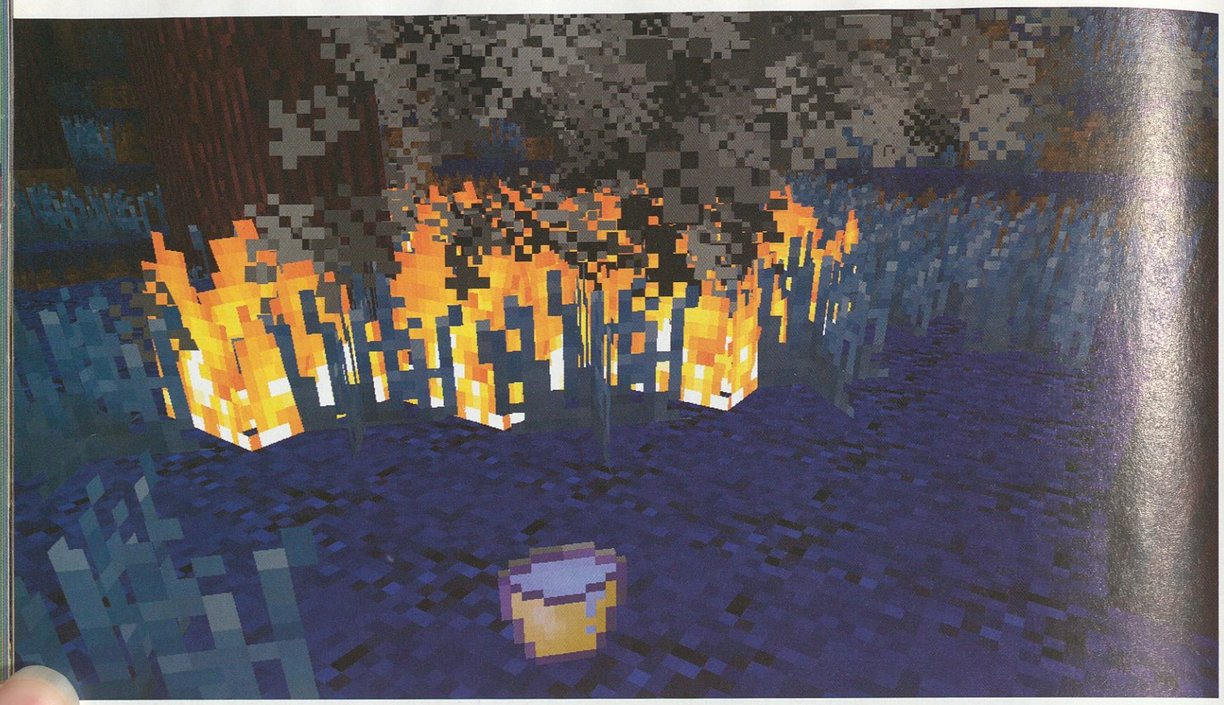
www.bit.ly/1FEKgsu

Thaumcraft adds magic to Minecraft, but not the videogamey left-click-to-fireball sort of magic we're used to. Thaumcraft imagines the dark arts as a sort of twisted science. Wands must be carved from special trees and aspects of magic must be studied to learn enchantments. Misuse of magic curses the land with 'taint'. If a creature dies on corrupted land, they come back in a monstrous, twisted form.

FIVE NIGHTS AT FREDDY'S

www.bit.ly/1EzyAmJ

Five Night's at Freddy's is a horror adventure game that challenges you to defend a pizza parlour from an array of hideous living animatronic monsters. The Minecraft version lets you spawn in some of the creepiest characters from the game and defeat them to earn their weapons



SHADOW WORLD

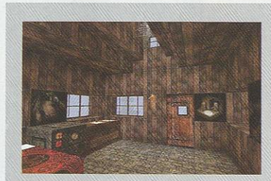
www.bit.ly/1PjpUq8

This adds a dark new dimension to your game that you can access by building a portal out of Lapis Lazuli. Step through and you're rewarded with a diary to guide you through the dark. It updates as you explore to give you information on the Shadow World's strange monsters and ores.

THE AMNESIA MOD

www.bit.ly/1IZwFMq

This is a collection of mods that, when installed together, recreate the horrifying experience of being trapped in a spooky house with a blocky version of Amnesia's vile, flappy-jawed monster. A sanity bar measures your fear (or rather, abject terror) as you explore, so be sure to keep your lantern well-stocked with oil. Because you wouldn't like it in there when it gets dark...



SILENT HILL RESOURCE PACK

www.bit.ly/1JeNfJA

From the dark, warped wood to horrifying reskins of Minecraft's baddies, this texture pack does a great job of capturing the essence of the creepiest game series ever made. Expect lots of rusted metal and dark colours, and some seriously messed up zombies.

SURVIVAL HORROR M...

www.bit.ly/1NCthrP

A more action-packed adventure map than many on the list, this level pits you against hordes of incoming zombies as you race around the mansion trying to activate generators and bring the lights back on. Resources are limited, and you'll need to be good with a weapon to make it through all 25 waves.

WITCHERY

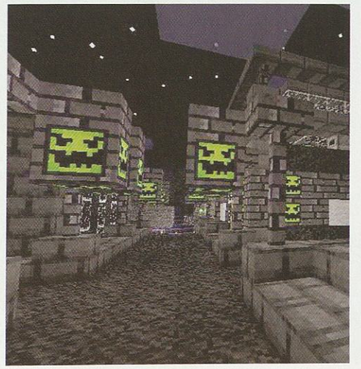
www.bit.ly/1PgDXLw

Not many mods offer you the chance to learn the mysterious ways of a witch. Witchery invites you to build a lair and cultivate a garden of magical plants for potion-brewing. If you'd rather get to the nastier, more powerful spells you'll have to put down some glyphs and make a pact with a demon. Beware, there may be dark consequences.

PT SILENT HILLS

www.bit.ly/1KtarQM

The PlayStation 4 teaser for a cancelled Silent Hill game provided some of the biggest scares of 2014. This map attempts to recreate that horror in Minecraft. You travel around a small loop of corridors, but elements change with each lap. The effect is unsettling at first, but that soon escalates to raw horror. Raw. Horror.



NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS RESOURCE PACK

www.bit.ly/1HTAWwO

This pack retextures Minecraft in the style of the Tim Burton movie A Nightmare Before Christmas. Expect lovely snow and some canny retextures of Minecraft's villains. The Enderman now has a Jack Skellington look, and the creepers are designed to look like Oogie Boogie.

ABANDONED MINESHAFT

Again, not technically a biome, but these generated structures can often link up with one another, becoming huge, map-spanning underground labyrinths. Minecarts and chests of loot spawn naturally here, as do cobwebs and cave spider spawners. Also, watch out for skeletons, which can hide quite effectively behind the wooden posts that are dotted about in the shadows.

Chests can contain both dud loot such as bread, or awesome early game trend setters, including diamonds.

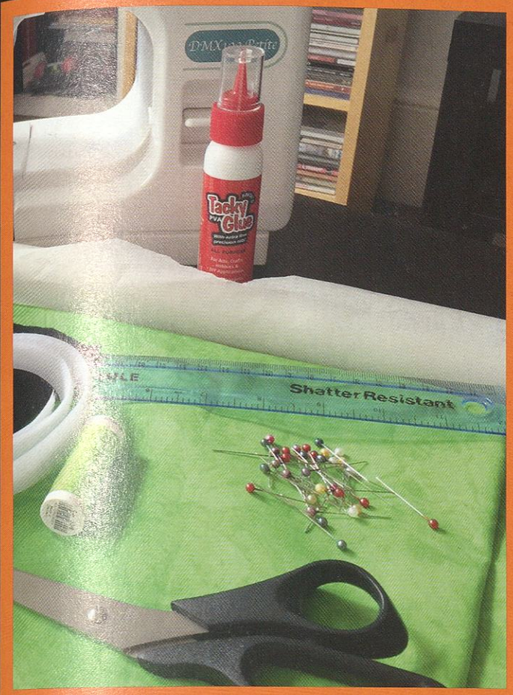
Melon seeds can only be found naturally generated in the chests hidden in abandoned mineshafts. So get searching!

Many of the pathways in these twisting mineshafts can look the same, so be sure to mark your progress with tactically placed torches.

HOW TO

CREEPY CRAFTY

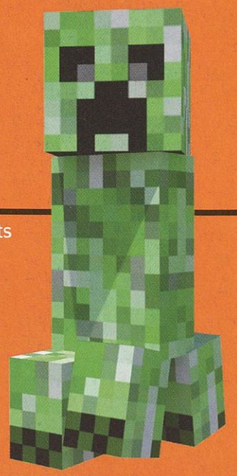
Let your creative side out with our creeper cushion how-to



KIT LIST

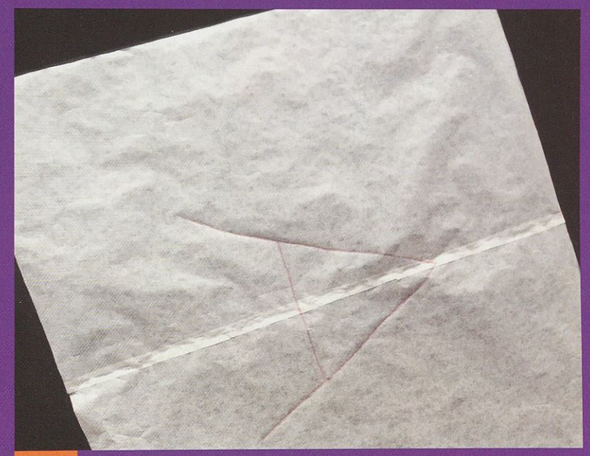
All your cushiony ingredients

- A 16" cushion pad
- Half a metre of green fabric
- Matching green thread
- Two squares of black felt
- Some velcro
- Fabric glue
- Scissors
- A few sewing pins
- A ruler
- A pen or pencil
- Some baking or tracing paper
- A sewing machine or sewing kit
- An iron



If you fancy giving your bedroom, games room or living room a bit of a revamp, why not do so with your favourite game? Cushions are a really great way to do this – they're super easy, only take a few hours to make and don't need a whole ton of materials. Seeing as it's Halloween, we've gone for a creeper face. Their vivid green skin also means they'll add a wonderful pop of colour to any room. Ah, who are we kidding? We just think there's no better way to celebrate than with one of Minecraft's most recognisable baddies!

To make your cushion cover, you'll need the following: a 16" cushion pad; half a metre of green fabric (cotton or light canvas would be ideal for this, but just ask in a fabric shop if you're not sure); matching green thread; two squares of black felt; some velcro; fabric glue; scissors; a ruler, pen/pencil and some baking/tracing paper; and a sewing machine or sewing kit. Our instructions assume you'll be using a sewing machine, but don't worry if you don't have access to one – all of the sewing can be done by hand, and will just take a little longer. Whatever you use, please be careful not to prick or cut your fingers. We hear they're precious.



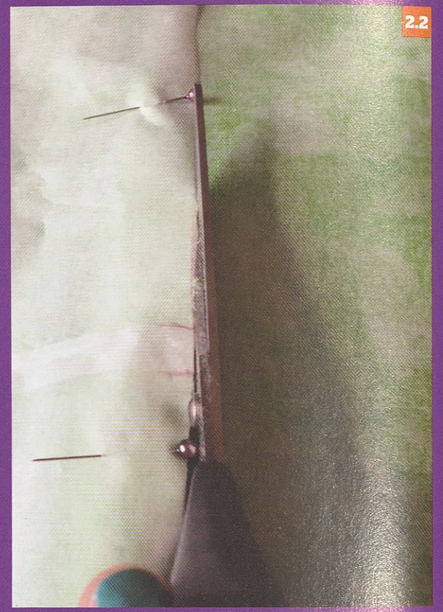
1 TRACE YOUR TEMPLATE

Measure and cut out your pattern pieces onto your baking or tracing paper, using the dimensions shown on page 89. You'll need one each of Piece A and Piece B. All of the corners need to be right angles, so be careful as you're drawing them out – using the edge of the paper as one edge of each piece is a good idea to help with this, and you could even use a protractor to make sure your rectangles are perfectly ship-shape.

2.1

2 PIN IT TOGETHER

Lay your fabric out flat. If it has any wrinkles or creases in it, it's worth ironing it now. Then place your pattern pieces on top and pin them into place. If you're having trouble keeping the paper lying flat, putting your pins in so that they're at a diagonal angle to the edges of the pattern pieces will help. Now cut out your pattern pieces from the fabric, and unpin the paper. You'll need to make two of Piece B, but just one of Piece A.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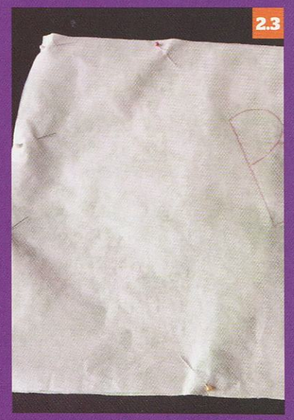

2.3

2.4

SWEET TREAT

You'll be doing a bit of waiting around while the glue dries on your project, but that's time you can use to make snacks! To recreate Minecraft's famous red-and-white cake, just make up a basic victoria sponge mixture, and bake it in a square tin (if you don't have one of these, you could always just use a bread knife to square off the edges of a round cake). Brush the top with some gently warmed apricot jam, then roll out some white fondant icing to size. Finish it off with some squares of red fondant icing, and you've got a cake fit for the Ender Dragon himself!

3.1

3.2

3 MAKE THE HEM

Take one of your Piece Bs and turn them so that the patterned/coloured side of your fabric (the right side) is facing downwards. Fold down one of the long edges towards you by 1.5cm, and iron it into place. Then fold it over again by another 3cm, and again iron it into place – this makes a hem and stops the fabric from fraying. Sew along your hem, about 2.5cm from the fabric's new edge. You'll now have one hemmed edge and three unhemmed ones. Repeat this with your second Piece B.

3.3

3.4

3.5

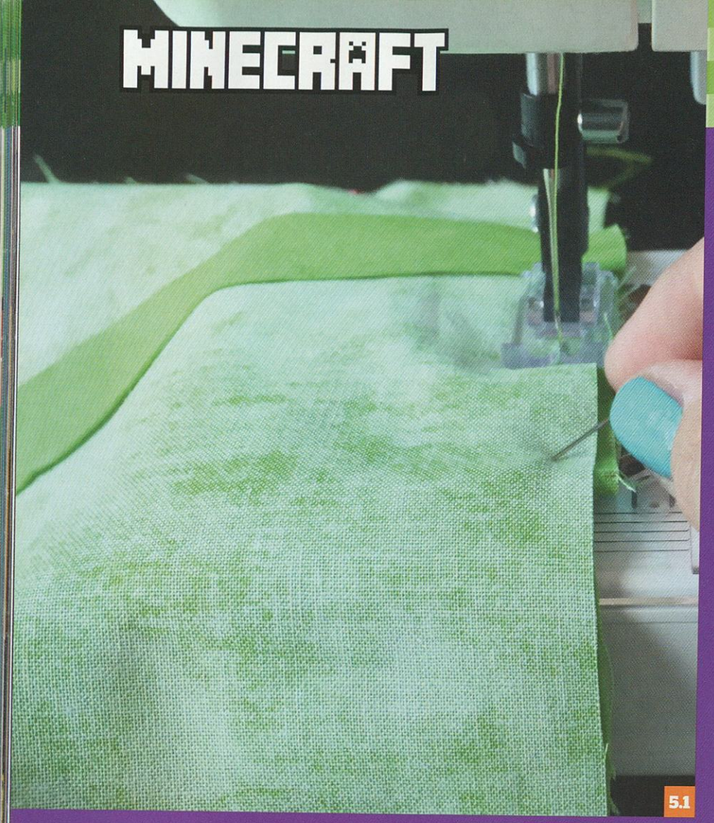
3.6

4.1

4 LINE IT ALL UP

Place Piece A with the right side facing up, and then place your first Piece B on top of it (right-side down), lining up the unhemmed edges and making sure that two of the corners are square. The right sides of the fabric should be facing one another. Pin the pieces together. Line up and pin the other Piece B in a similar manner, but using the opposite edge of Piece A. The two hemmed edges of the Piece Bs will overlap – but don't worry! This will form an opening for you to pop the cushion into.

4.2



5.1

5 SEW AND SEW

Sew around the edges of your cushion cover, leaving a 1.5cm gap between your stitching and the edges of the fabric. This will give you a buffer against fraying. When you reach a corner, simply stop 1.5cm away from the edge of the fabric, lift your machine's presser foot (the bit holding the material in place) and turn the fabric 90°, leaving the needle in the fabric as you do so. Once you've turned it, just pop the presser foot back down and you're good to carry on sewing. Be careful to remove each pin before you reach it, though – sewing over them can break your needle!

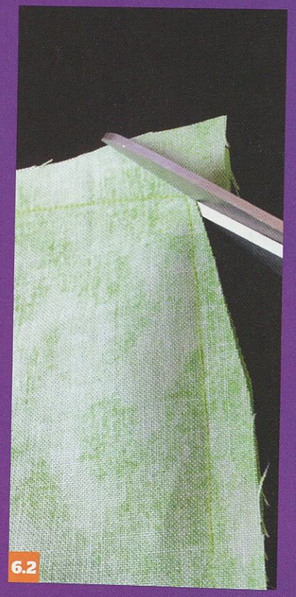
5.2

6

6.1

CORNER TIME

Now that your cushion cover is all in one piece, it's time to sort out the corners. Using a pair of scissors, trim gradually (and very carefully!) in towards each corner, making sure you leave at least a few millimetres of spare fabric around the stitching. Once you've done that, turn the cushion cover inside-out – although this will actually return it to being the right way around! If your corners are being stubborn, you can use your pen (put the lid on first so you don't make it all inky!) to poke them out fully from the inside. Give your project one final press with the iron. If something's worth doing, it's worth doing properly, after all.



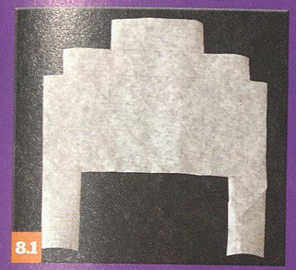
6.2

GO GO VELCRO

Cut your velcro so that it's a few centimetres shorter than the width of the opening at the back of your cushion. Apply a generous amount of fabric glue to one side of the velcro, and press it firmly into place inside the top flap of the cover's opening. Be patient, and let it dry completely – it's a good idea to leave something heavy on top of it as it dries. Then repeat the process with the other side of the velcro and the bottom flap.

7

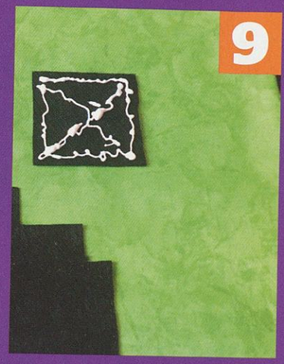
8.2



8.1

8 GET YOUR FACE ON

Cut out the templates for the Creeper's face from p88. If you can't bear to cut up your precious bookazine, you could trace them on to some more baking paper instead. Pin them to the felt (you should be able to get both eyes from one square of felt, and then the mouth from the other) and carefully cut around them.



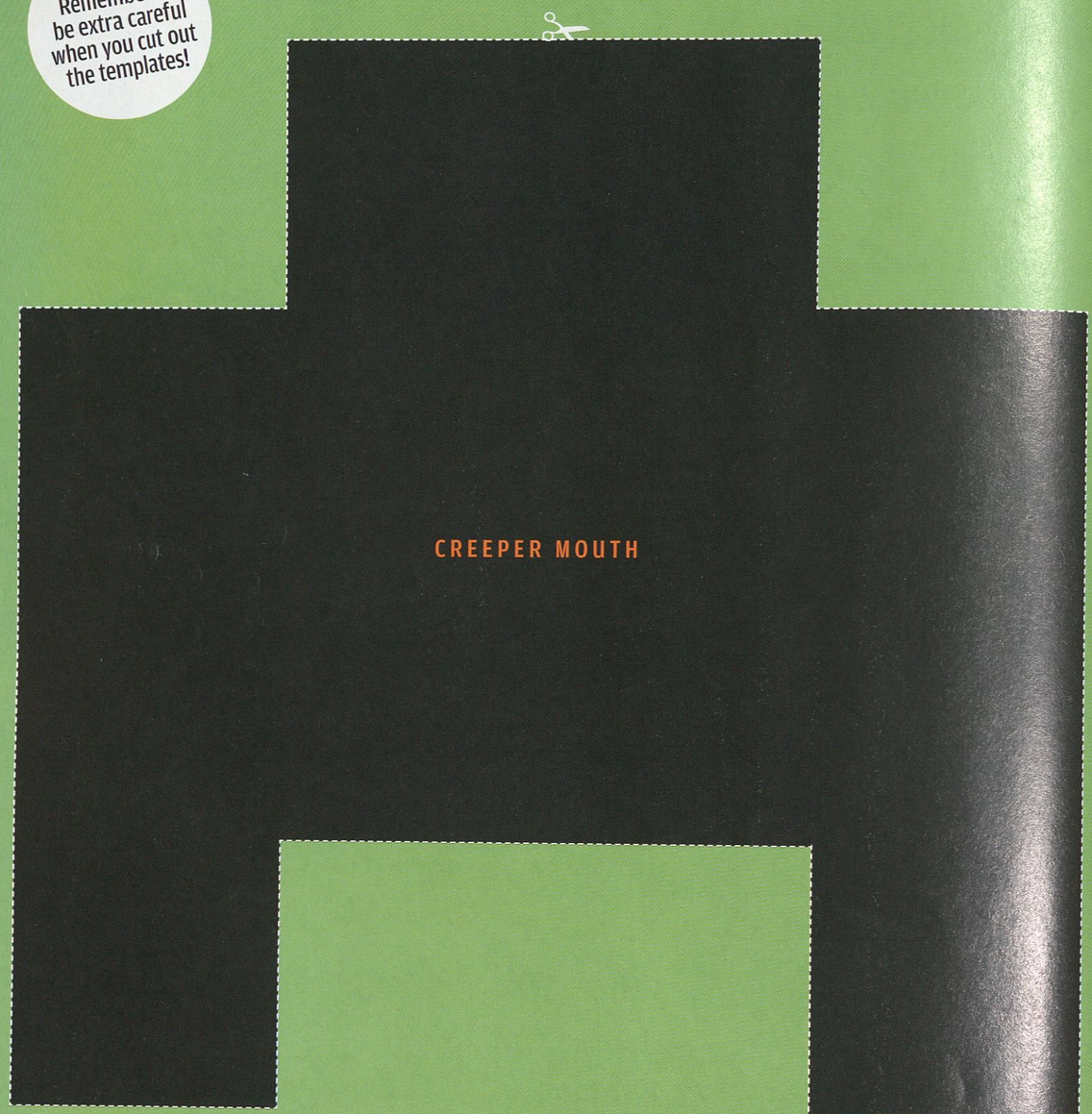
9 GLUE THE BITS

Arrange the features on the front of your cushion, and make sure you're happy with where they'll sit. It's best not to put them too close to the edges. When you've got them just right, pop some glue on the back of each feature (make sure you go right to the edges, so that they don't peel off) and fix them firmly to the cushion cover. Again, it's time to play the waiting game. Why not make the cake on p84 to kill your boredom? Mmmmm, cake...

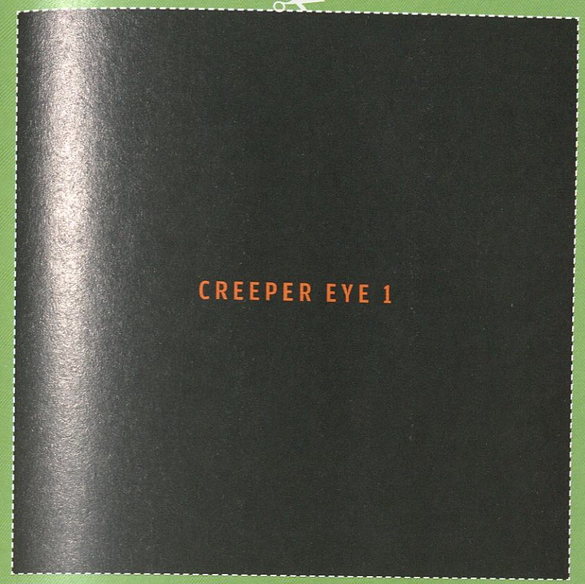
10 IT'S READY!

Once everything is dry, all you need to do is open up the velcro and insert your cushion pad. Voila – your own cuddly creeper pal! Please note, we can accept no responsibility if your creeper cushion explodes and destroys part of your house. Sorry about that.

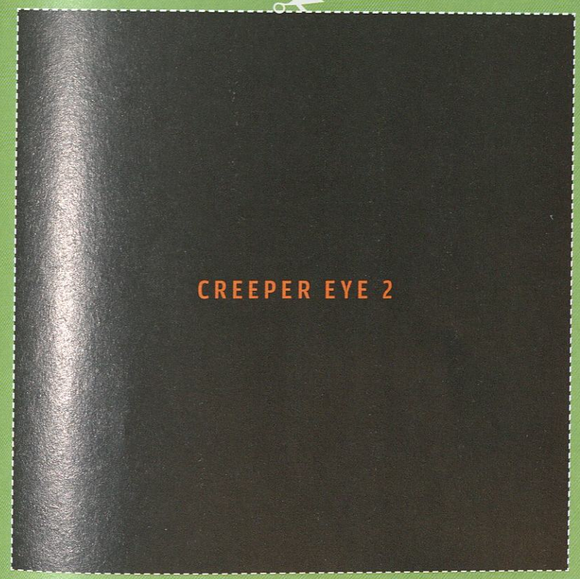
Remember to be extra careful when you cut out the templates!



CREEPER MOUTH



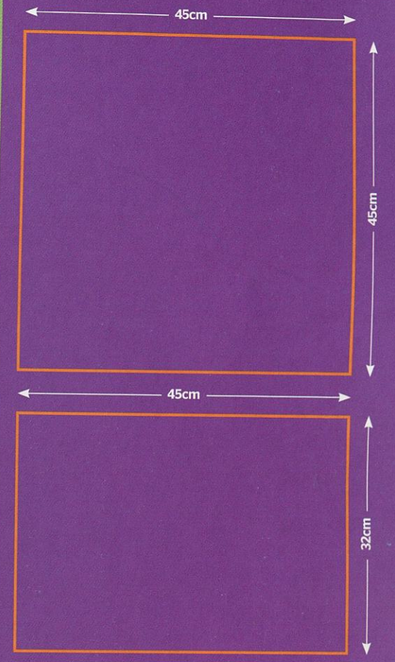
CREEPER EYE 1



CREEPER EYE 2

They might just look like blocky squares of paper, but wait till you get them on your cushion!

DIMENSIONS



CHANGING FACES

If you've been bitten by the sewing bug, a little imagination is all you need to make some other famous Minecraft creatures. Just follow our instructions up until step 8, then design your own template of your favourite character. How about purple and white felt on a black cushion cover to make an enderman? Or black on grey to create a skeleton? Heck, you could even fashion your own Steve – we'd love to see your pictures!

STRONGHOLD

To activate the end portal and reach The End you'll need to use an eye of ender on each of the 12 blocks that make up the end portal's frame.

You can find libraries in a stronghold. More rarely, you'll find dual story libraries with a chest of loot hidden in one corner.

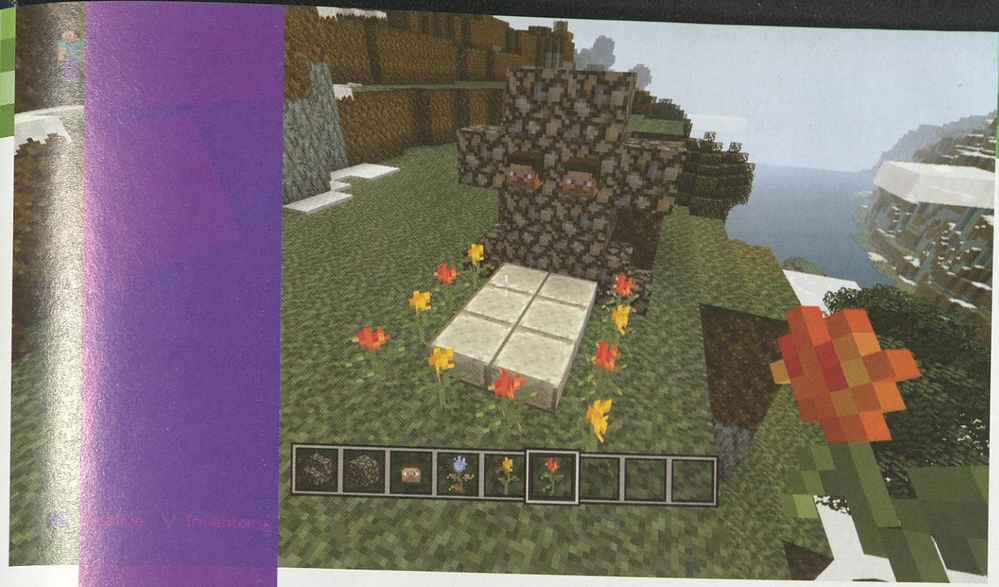
On PC there is a limit of three maximum strongholds per world. On consoles there's only ever one, however.

Ok, so technically speaking this isn't an individual biome in and of itself. It is however vast and iconic enough a general location to warrant its own section. Strongholds can be found by flinging an eye of ender into the air and following the purple trail that results. These underground fortresses house end portals, and are essential for reaching The End.

12 WAYS TO DIE IN MINECRAFT

A dozen ways to meet your maker by your own blocky hand...

It's a little weird to be talking about ways to die in a sandbox game, because the word 'sandbox' doesn't exactly conjure up images of fire and flames and destruction, unless your experience of playtime was a little bit more homicidal than the regular kind. But Minecraft, the huge, popular blockathon that it is, ain't your regular sandbox, kid. Welcome to a world where plants explode, lava oozes from every crevice, and you must never, NEVER venture into the water. When you're given every tool and possibility in the world, you can either build a giant, golden version of your own face, or you can get creative. Go out in a blaze of glory, or just log on to your little brother's profile and go mad. Remember, kicking the bucket – or should that be blocket? – is nothing to be afraid of in Minecraft. Unlike real life, you can always respawn, so here's a few ways to go out in style.



1

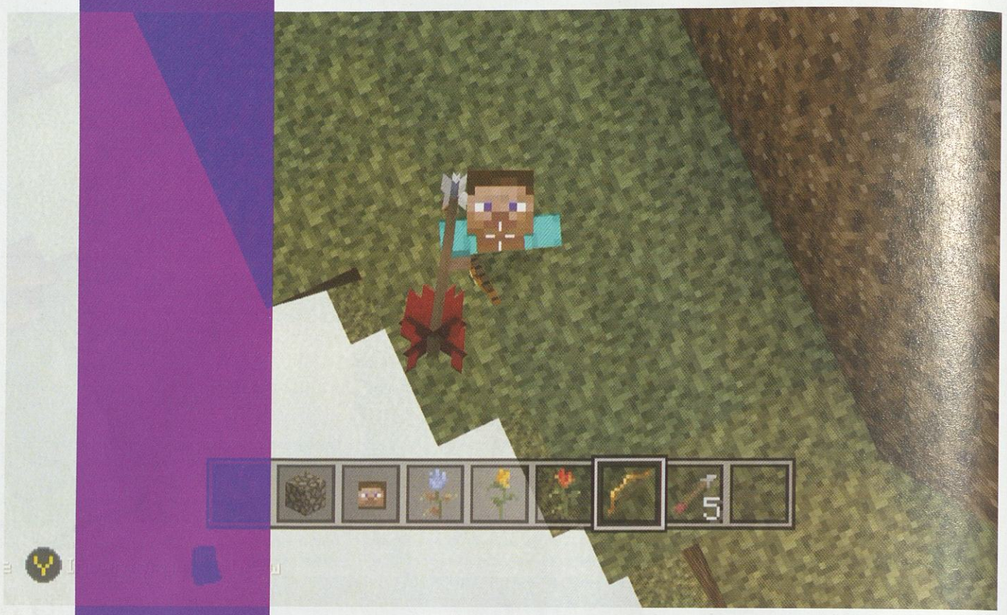
Dig dig dig

You could build yourself a nice little underwater cave and dig out of it, watching it slowly fill your shoes, then the room, then your lungs. But why not go one step further? Prepare yourself a little vault about... oh, let's say about seven feet down. Fill it with horrible things like lava and squids and pistons to squash you up into Minecraft meat. Make sure it's also got all the things you want to take with you into the afterlife, too – like pigs and cake – and then build yourself a nice little grave up on the surface. When the time comes, gather your friends around you and slowly dig down into your grave, as they recite poems about how nice your hair was, throwing flowers down onto your (still alive, for now) body. Then, as you break open the vault, you'll tumble in, be instantly eviscerated and your friends can go and have a nice wake. Maybe there will be tiny vol-au-vents.

2

Enderman baiting

Go and find yourself an enderman. He's usually lurking in the last place you expect him, so make sure to not expect him at all times and he'll probably pop right up and make you scream in a surprisingly high-pitched voice. Then, take him by the hand and lead him towards your favourite restaurant. Oh, Bella Italia? He loves that. He'll probably have the crab linguine. He's meant to be on a diet, but go on, it's time for a treat. Repeat this for a few months, making sure to tell him he's beautiful and gaze into those wide, purple eyes. Then, one day, just when he's starting to open up to you... tell him you're dating his sister. BOOM, insta-kill. That guy has such a temper on him.



3

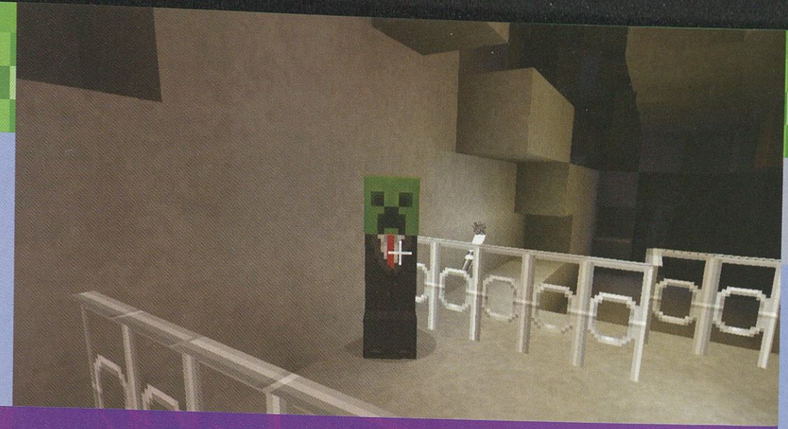
Pew pew pew

Grab yourself a bow and arrow (or several if you're feeling extravagant) because it's time to get medieval Point Break all up in here. First step: make sure your bow and arrow has been properly tested by the proper authorities, because safety is a top priority in archery. Secondly: fire madly up into the sky like those guys do in those cool cop films. Feel free to make "PEW PEW" noises as you do – or, if you'd prefer, pretend you're upset about your cop friend that died or retired or whatever and cry. It's all about immersion with this one. Apart from the fact it's not a gun. Then, wait for the hailstorm of arrows to fall back down to earth (thanks, gravity) and hope that one of them hits you. Receive a posthumous award for awesome coolness.

4

Darwin award

The recipients of the 2009 Darwin Award – an accolade only received by those who meet their maker in particularly dumb ways – were two bank robbers who overestimated the amount of dynamite it would take to blow open a bank vault. Needless to say, they quickly realised their mistake, possibly shortly before the bank vault passed through their heads. Recreate this unfortunate oversight by amassing all the TNT you can get your square mitts on, building the biggest pile of explosives the server can manage, light the fuse and wait to pop your clogs in the most stylish (and messy) way possible. You'll be blown sky high, so that probably means you'll get to heaven faster... right?



5

Adopting a creeper as a pet

Some people like to court danger. Some people have snakes as pets, others have tarantulas. But you – you're different. You want something more than your run-of-the-mill, venomous housemate. You crave real danger, the kind where your very life hangs in the balance with every second that goes by. What you'll need to do for this one is lure a creeper into a pre-built pen – at a safe distance, of course – and then once he's in, pen him in for good. Make sure you feed him and clean him out every day, because pets are a lot of responsibility – remember, a creeper is for life, not just for Creepsmas. Over time, you'll begin to feel like your beloved pet is warming to you, and just when you let your guard down and go and scratch him behind the ear (or whatever creepers have) – he'll explode and kill you. I thought we had an understanding, Fluffy.

6

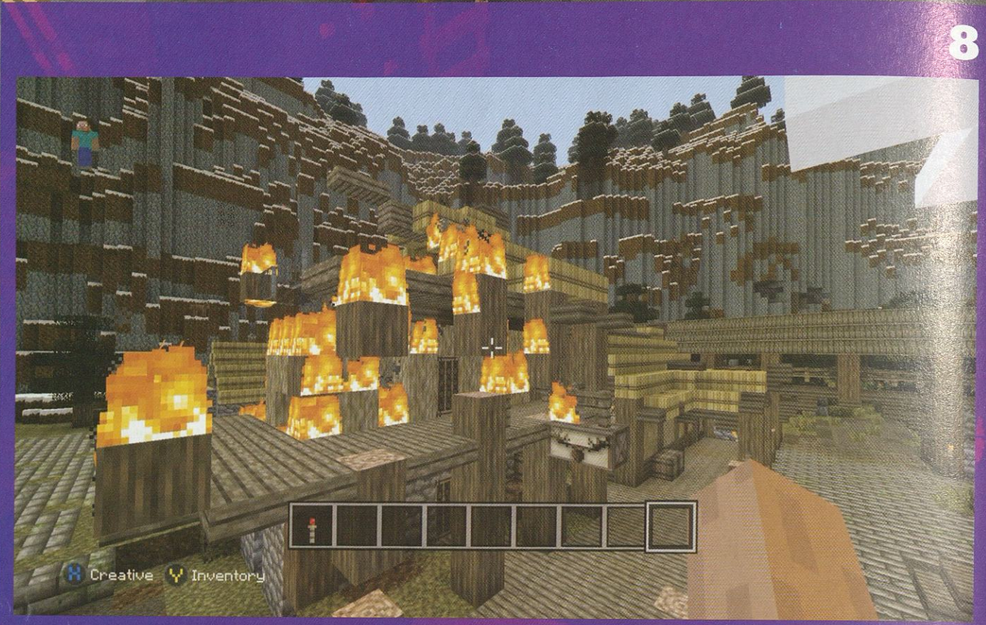
Trying to recreate a Cool Guy explosion

You know, the one where an explosion goes off in a building or a car, and the cool guy doesn't even look back. He maybe puts on some sunglasses and he keeps walking. You know a guy is cool when he doesn't even think an explosion is worth looking at! He's seen so much awesome stuff in his life that an explosion pales in comparison! He's probably seen puppies riding kittens like horses, and his own face in a slice of toast. So you can try to recreate this in Minecraft by lighting a bunch of TNT inside a building, then slowly, nonchalantly walking away. Of course, you're not nearly as cool as those cool guys, so you turn to look at the explosion, and then you get brick shrapnel in your eye and die. If only you were cool.

7

Make a minecart ride that flings you into a cliff

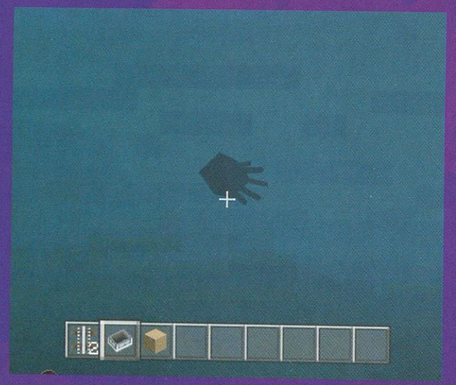
Theme parks are all well and good, but the exhilarating thrill of a rollercoaster is slightly dampened by the fact that you're never really in any danger. Sure, the adrenaline coursing through your veins is your body's way of saying "OH NO OH NO I THINK WE'RE DYING", but your brain knows better. Most rollercoasters are just a series of loops and spirals designed to trick you into thinking you're having a heart attack. But we know your game, rollercoasters, and we have Minecraft to make up for the decades of lies. So build yourself a nice little minecart ride, and hop on. This isn't just any minecart ride. This is a one-way minecart ride, because it flings you straight into a cliff. WHEEEEEE splat. No refunds.



8

Hubris

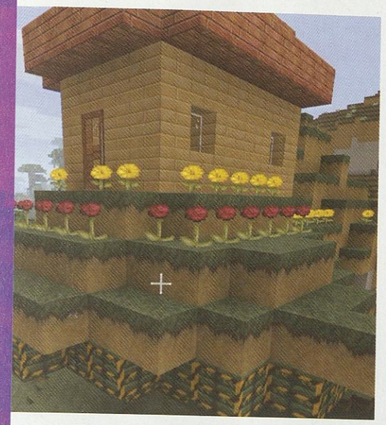
Hubris, as they say, is a fatal flaw. Nothing angers the gods more than thinking you're better than them. Unfortunately, there are no gods in Minecraft, but you control your own destiny instead – and when you're as powerful as a god, what do you do? Build a giant, wooden palace for yourself, of course. Towering statues of your godlike figure stand over the entrance, and inside are little wooden acolytes ready to cater to your every need. The piece de resistance, of course, is the 14-foot shrine to yourself, containing relics – like a half-eaten sandwich or your very first roughly hewn weapon – and surrounded by torches. This is where the hubris kicks in, because if there's one thing we know, it's that wooden palaces and torches are a bad mix. BOOM. Flames everywhere. That'll teach you to be vain. There might not be gods in Minecraft – but there's still karma. Lots and lots of it.



9

Squid aquarium

Just like the best James Bond villains, you like to court danger. And you can't exactly do an evil monologue about how you're going to rule the world without some kind of dangerous animal nearby, just to emphasise the point that you're a very bad man and you've probably eaten at least one full human person. For fun. If you can work out how, cram a load of those tricky deep-sea squids into a lovely tank – they'll probably be happy as long as you keep feeding spies to them – and make sure you've got a big leather chair to sit in as well. Then, just wait for James Bond to turn up, threaten him, tell him your evil plan, and just sit back and wait, because he'll probably chuck you into the squid aquarium faster than you can say: "Nooooo, I'm allergic to squids".



10

Inviting your friend onto your server

The last time we played Minecraft with a friend, this is what happened. They popped up, ready for charming adventure, and we decided to build a nice little house. Now, sometimes, you get trolls – people who try to push you off cliffs and throw cows at you until you perish – but not this time. This was lovely, it was peaceful. What can go wrong when all you're doing is building an idyllic little cottage? Well, let us tell you. It turns out that all the time we were building this house, our 'friend' was secretly tunnelling underneath and planting an entire network of TNT. We were none the wiser, because normal people don't expect their 'friend' to be secretly planning an explosion that would make Dr Evil weep. So once the house was finished, we stood back to admire our work, only to be reduced to meaty chunks not five seconds later. Needless to say, that 'friend' doesn't get invited round any more.

11

Setting traps and forgetting them

It's just one of those days. You go to your car, you've lost your keys. You get to school/work and you've forgotten your homework/the important file on the Jenkins account. You go home, and there's nothing in the fridge for tea and you have to resort to eating a banana you found at the bottom of your bag. Nothing's going right. So you turn to lovely, relaxing Minecraft. You go towards your nice little cottage, filled with things like flowers and axes – but just as you approach, you're blown to bits. What? What just happened? Ah, of course. Before you went to bed last night you decided to pepper the ground with traps. Pits, lava, TNT everywhere, just in case anyone tried to tinker with your crib. Of course, now the only one who gets to experience the joy of seeing their legs get separated from their body is you, because you forgot about all the traps. Nice one, silly.

12

Try to ride the Ender Dragon

You've just played a load of Skyrim and you consider yourself to be the best dragon-slayer around. Your bedsheets are covered in dragon blood. You eat dragon egg omelettes for breakfast. Your stylish winter coat is made entirely of dragon leather. Oh yeah, you're a badass alright. So you turn on Minecraft, ready for an evening of exploration and bending the elements to your will, as usual. But oh – what's that in the sky? It's an Ender Dragon! You rub your hands together in glee. Fus Ro Dah, my dear dragon friend – I am the dragonborn, and it's time you learned a lesson about not being alive when I'm around. You grab your diamond sword (oooh so shiny) and take a running dive, thinking about what lovely curtains you can make from his wings. But no, somewhat surprisingly the Ender Dragon has different ideas, mostly ending in your death – whether it's an acid bath or an unfortunate teleport right over the ocean. Oops, says the Ender Dragon. Guess you're not the dragonborn after all.

DEEP OCEAN

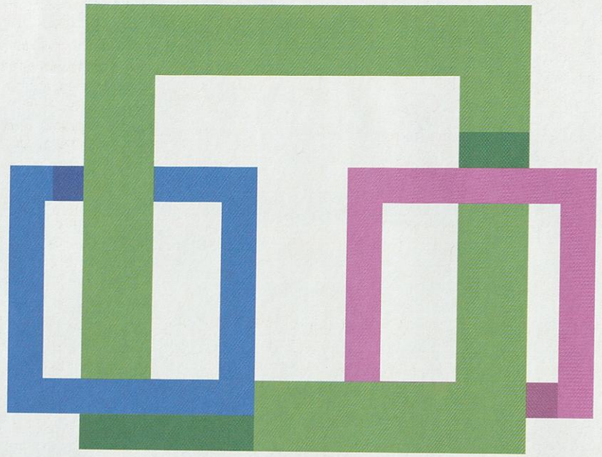
It might initially appear similar to the regular ocean biome, but delve down into the depths and you'll find potentially epic secrets within. In deep oceans, the sea bed can be upwards of 30 blocks deep, making navigation a real pain as light generally won't travel down that far. We recommend a combo of a cracking quality helmet with the respiration enchantment, and the tactical use of air pocket creation for optimal exploratory options.

Deep ocean is the only biome where you'll find ocean monuments. Be extra careful when exploring these as we're talking endgame difficulty guardians to fight against here.

Having a hard time seeing anything in the murky depths? You are not alone. Sort yourself out with the Clearwater mod to increase the general brightness.

Carry an empty bucket and you'll be able to scoop a block's worth of water out from in front of you, giving you a quick hit of oxygen.

THINKING OUTSIDE



OF THE BLOCKS

Which other computer games can scratch your Minecrafty itch?

Ancient Chinese poet and philosopher Lao-Tzu once said "If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading." He might not have had a lifelong ambition to reach The Farlands in mind when he came up with that particular ditty, but we reckon it's safe to infer that doing the same thing you always do means missing out on an as yet unknowable adventure. So why not branch out from Minecraft a bit and see what else is worth your time in the wider world?

Don't worry about accidently picking a damp squib and wasting your precious daylight hours, though, as we've gone ahead and hand-picked the very best alternatives to the infamous king of the sandbox/crafting/survival genre heap. So here's our recommendations for five games to try out right now, whether they've fully launched or are pick-up-able on Early Access. After that, we've booted up our scrying pools to predict which five more upcoming games might very well be vying for your attention soon.

RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW

Delve into five of the best Minecraft alternatives available at this very moment in time

1 STARBOUND

You know those moments when you crest a rise in Minecraft and see a verdant new landscape ripe for exploring splay out in front of you? Somehow, despite packing its many procedural worlds into a 2D mould, Starbound generates this moment ad infinitum. Each time you light jump away from a planet – one you may have called home for hours or even days of play time – you arrive at the next one not knowing what to expect. Avian sky pirates? A treasure-filled tomb of a long forgotten god? Or perhaps a CCTV-riddled cityscape, where a race of ape-humanoids are held in the grip of a technologically overpowered government? You have an upgradable ship to act as your rock in the vast stream of Starbound's inventive biome types, mind, so there's still a keen sense of ownership and of returning home after a long day's resource gathering.

RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW

2 LEGO WORLDS

It's out in Early Access right now, and while it might not be the most polished of offerings in this list, the plastic foundation blocks are in place for a revolutionary crafting sandbox to take shape. The most immediately appreciable element to its brand of buildery is the vast number of rideable things dotted about. See an animal? Then ride an animal! Everything from tiny puppy dogs to hulking great fire-breathing dragon-kin can be leapt upon for a test drive. The worlds at the moment feel a little too small, undermining (sorry, not sorry) any potential for dense exploration, but the lure of flying a little LEGO biplane across a LEGO cityscape built with friends (multiplayer is also inbound in the future) is too enticing to ignore.

3 TERRARIA

Best known not just for being a top notch crafter in its own right, but for providing a palpable sense of adventure, Terraria caught a lot of people that bounced off of Minecraft's broad open world. It gave players the same tiered crafting experience, but with more obvious objectives and more immediately effective loot (jetpacks, anyone?). It even brought a series of boss fights, steadily increasing in both size and difficulty. The best bit about it is that it does away with those occasionally boring between bits that occur while exploring. In the world of Terraria, wherever you dig there will be something worth finding, and danger really does lie in wait around every corner.

4 ARK: SURVIVAL EVOLVED

It came out of nowhere onto Steam's Early Access and has been a constant presence at the top of the charts ever since. "Why might that be?" you ask? Mayhap it's something to do with the many nine-year-old child-dreams it caters for. The island you are tasked with surviving upon is filled with dinos for a start, everything from Parasaurs to Pterodactyls. Better yet, you can train and ride said lizards. Still a bit too real for you? Then perhaps a summonable dragon to battle with alongside an army of your tribesmates is the ticket? With a difficulty curve sharper than a Japanese sushi knife, Ark won't be for everyone – but break into its hardcore systems and life finds a way.

5 RUST

Often seen as a sort of Minecraft for grown-ups, Rust takes the familiar triumvirate of crafting, exploring and surviving, and throws in a dash of grade-A malice. There's no escaping from the fact that people can be very cruel to each other in this multiplayer-aimed world, perhaps as a by-product of the prospect of fighting other players with rocks in order to procure so much as a pair of trousers at the outset. Gather some trustworthy pals to your cause, however, and there's plenty of fun to be had fortifying your own base, from humble shack beginnings, through to legitimate raid-proof skyscrapers. Or perhaps you'll be the one doing the raiding? You arch cad, you.

AHEAD OF THE GAMES

Get a load of these five potential contenders for the Minecraft throne yet to launch

1 PLANETS³

While it might be the unique visuals that draw you to this Kickstarted crafter, it's the underlying promise of a fleshed out world and storyline to follow along that sets it apart. Similarly to Minecraft, its world is built with voxels, though not just cubes – you'll get to use triangular components, too. You'll also get to construct your own vehicle designs to help navigate the world, and weapons you wield will be fully customisable. During the course of the story, players will travel between planets using either a ship they've discovered or one they've built themselves in order to plunge deeper into the core of undiscovered worlds and the dungeons that hide beneath the surface.

2 PROVEN LANDS

Too many sandboxes end up being collect-o-thons, so it's especially refreshing to hear Proven Lands' developer is putting together this sci-fi infused number. In it, you'll help a stranded astronaut survive a harsh new wilderness on a distant world. You'll get to do the regular weapon and suit upgrading malarky, sure, but alongside that you'll be digging into a rich tapestry of new physics, biology and chemistry. Right now there's just the one sandy biome on show, but on the horizon are forests, caves, ice tundras and volcanos.

3 TERRARIA 2

Ho-Hoh! Now here's a thing. Indie developer and creator of the original, Andrew 'Redigit' Spinks, revealed that he's actually hard at work on the sequel. Not too much is known about it thus far. Character progression is set for an overhaul alongside a brand new loot system. Perhaps more enticingly, he mentions a plan for infinite worlds. Whether this means one world which goes on forever, or an infinite number of worlds to visit and plunder we'll have to wait and see. One thing we do know is that Terraria 2 won't be showing up on Kickstarter any time soon. Spinks has been outspoken in his desire to steer clear of crowdfunding.

4 BEFORE

This title from Garry's Mod and Rust studio Facepunch is set to take us back to the times when humanity thrived only within tribes. In the harsh climates of Before you'll have to gather together nomad peoples and ensure their survival through numbers. We're told to expect our tribe's culture and history to take shape over time, alongside hierarchies, power structures and rituals – this all while we contend with the finer details of providing food for the people and protecting the tribe's young against the elements. There's little in the way of launch details for the time being, so expect to have to wait it out while this is in development. With early screens showing such a gorgeous world, though, this one should be pinging loudly on your prehistoric radar.

5 FORTNITE

Made by the same minds that once gaffa-taped forestry hardware to machine guns in Gears Of War, this action-orientated affair sees you team up with pals to build forts and defend against an encroaching horde of monsters. The aim is to explore the landscape to source tools, weapons and materials that will enable you to fortify while steadily expanding outwards. The building system is especially designed to allow for quick-fire construction and repairs, as it's likely that much of your frantic construction will take place while your buds hold off waves of foes. Fortnite's in alpha at the moment, so if you register there's a slim chance that you could get to play it right now.

BLACK FOREST

Whatever you want to call them, these thickly wooded biomes are easy to spot thanks to the sunlight-blocking canopy roof that the huge number of trees create. An ideal wood farming locale, the trees here give you dark oak. You'll also find the odd large mushroom sprouting here and there, should you need a spot of soup to top you up mid logging expedition.

What makes dark oak such a great material to farm? Well while the trees themselves aren't so high as to pose any threat when climbing, the trunks are 2x2 blocks thick, so you'll get four times the wood per tree.

The roof of the forest is so dense that it can be dark enough for hostile mobs to spawn in the daytime.

Remember, if you want to stay carbon neutral you should really plant a sapling for every tree you knacker.

EVERYTHING WE KNOW ABOUT

COBALT

Why you should be excited about the adorable shooter from the makers of Minecraft

PROFILE

Jens 'Jeb' Bergensten

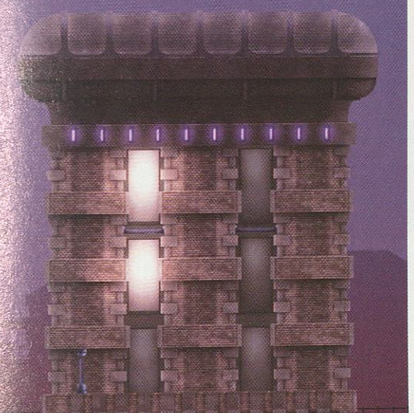
In 2009, while studying for his master's at Malmö University, Jens 'Jeb' Bergensten founded Oxeye Game Studio, along with Daniel Brynolf and Pontus Stammarberg. Then, in 2010, Mojang hired him to work on Scrolls, the studio's card game. Rather than close Oxeye, Bergensten brought the team with him. Though in December 2011, when he became lead developer on Minecraft, he had less time to work with his old studio.

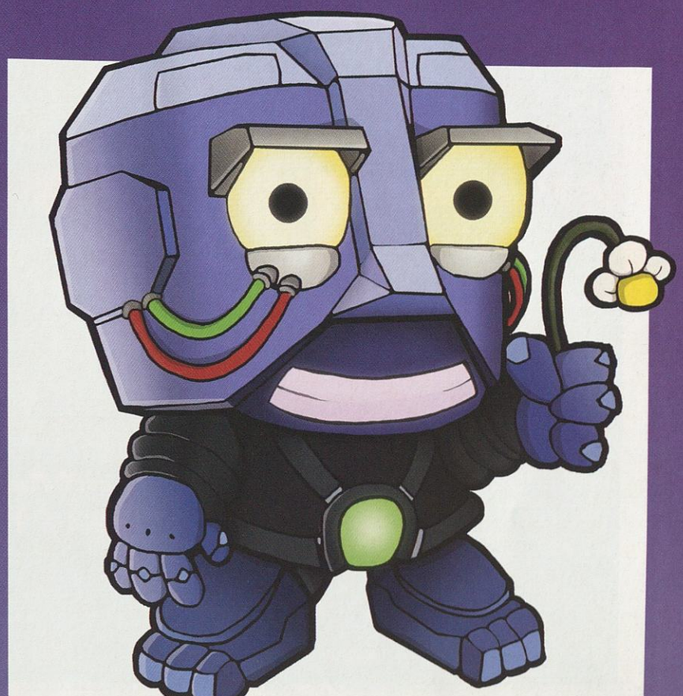
Before joining Mojang and becoming the lead developer on Minecraft, Jens 'Jeb' Bergensten was working on Cobalt, a game about battling robots that can slow down time and ride space hamsters.

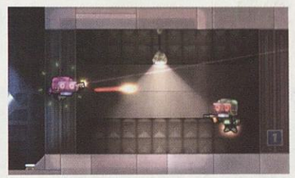
The project could have died when Bergensten left the team, as he was responsible for the engine the arena shooter was built on. Instead Mojang brought Oxeye Game studio into the fold, letting Bergensten's old team use the company offices.

Mojang also used its connections with Microsoft to set up a deal to bring Cobalt to the Xbox One. The setup was more like an incubator than a traditional publishing deal.

Cobalt's been in alpha since June, 2013, and it's finally ready to release this October. We thought it was about time we told you everything we know about Cobalt and why you should be excited about a shooter from Mojang.



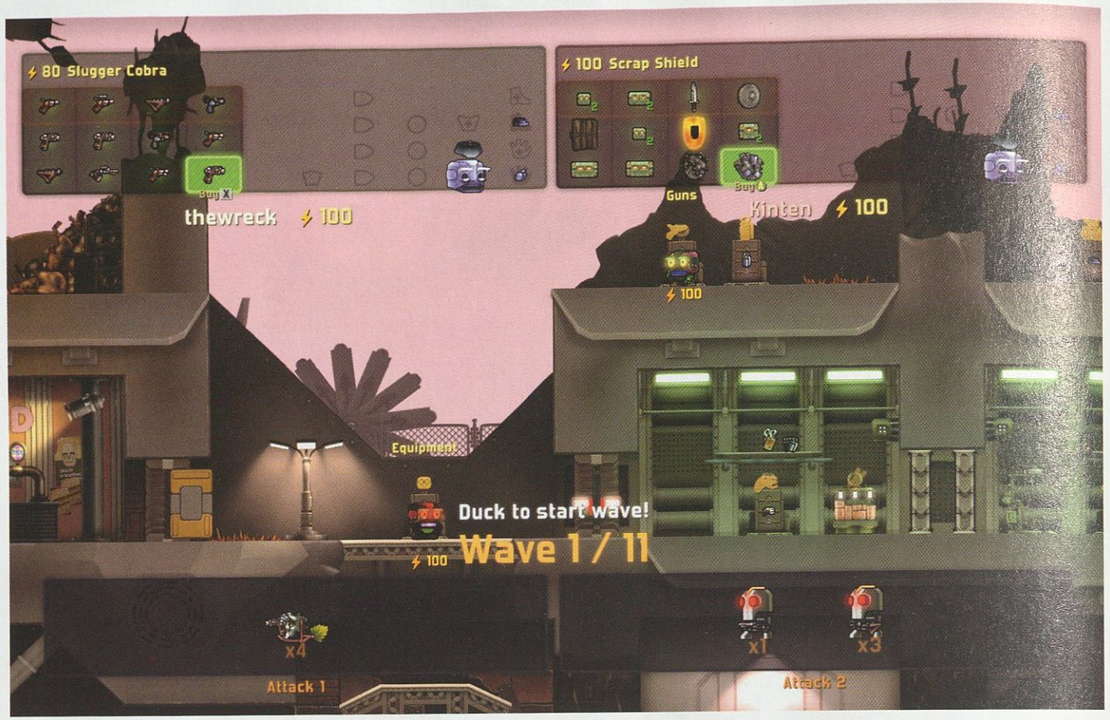




You Play A Cross Between A Robot Ninja And Max Payne

Cobalt is a side-on shooter where you play as an adorable, stunted robot. While short, your character is athletic, like a robotic ninja. You can leap long distances, combat roll, slide down walls, hang onto ledges and deflect projectiles, all abilities that let you dance around the level at speed. The manoeuvrability is vital because your enemies are armed to the teeth and able to spew out bullets and explosives from a shiny selection of guns.

The main trick up Cobalt's ninja sleeve is localised bullet time. Whenever you're in extreme danger – say, a grenade is about to hit you in the face – you enter super slow motion, giving you life-sparing extra moments to try and dodge the death-dealing ordnance. This slow-motion doesn't affect the whole level, though – only a tight circle around your character – the rest of the game carries on as normal. While this allows for split-second saves where you walk away from what appeared to be certain death, it can also be used against you by canny enemies in multiplayer. In Capture the Plug, for instance, if you're running from the enemy base with the plug, your pursuing enemies can trigger your bullet time by firing a rocket at you and, while you're in slow motion, overtake you and block you from your base.



The Single Player Is Basically Aliens

Cobalt's adventure mode sees you taking on the role of Agent Cobalt, a cyborg sent to find out why a human colony on an alien planet has gone silent. It's probably not a major spoiler to say that aliens are the reason and you'll have to shoot a lot of them to get to the bottom of the mystery.

In adventure mode, Cobalt plays like a side-scrolling platformer. You'll work through different levels of the abandoned colony, carving your way through enemies with machine guns, shotguns, rocket launchers, and grenades. Your arsenal will start small, but kills and completing missions will net you money which can be spent to unlock more equipment and to upgrade the guns you already have.

Oxeye has kept quiet on what you'll find in the single player, only opening the adventure mode up to a select group of alpha testers. But the team has been clear: Cobalt's campaign has space hamsters and you can ride them. Woo hoo! And you don't have to enjoy the thrill of riding a space hamster on your own, as Cobalt's campaign can be played in split-screen co-op.

Separate to the campaign, there's a challenge mode to test and train you in the ways of Cobalt's different mechanics. There are combat, speed, and puzzle challenges that see you doing things like freeing prisoners, killing particularly tough enemies as quickly as you can, and trying to make it through a maze of obstacles to the end of the map before the timer runs out.

"THE TEAM HAS BEEN CLEAR: COBALT'S CAMPAIGN HAS SPACE HAMSTERS"

We don't want to see inventory screens – give us the hamsters!

Watch your step robot boy – that space hamster's got the look of an angry panther about it! Eeeek!

Modding and Level Editing Tools Should Keep Cobalt Fresh

Oxeye will be releasing its level editor when Cobalt launches in October, letting you work with the same tools it used to make all of the game's 30 levels. Using the Steam Workshop and Xbox Live you'll be able to share levels online, so hopefully soon after launch there will be a lot more multiplayer maps to play around with. PC players will also have access to Cobalt's script files, which are all written in Lua code – a very accessible and easy to learn coding language – so the game's going to be very moddable. It shouldn't be too long until we see low gravity modes, instagib modes, and every modifier a deathmatch shooter should have in a post Unreal Tournament world.

Cobalt's almost been sunk a number of times: first, when Bergensten left Oxeye to join Mojang, and then when Microsoft bought out Mojang last year. Microsoft only guaranteed the future of Minecraft, and both Scrolls and Cobalt were left out of the press release. In August Mojang announced it was ceasing development on Scrolls, so Cobalt could easily have suffered the same fate. It's excellent then to see that this energetic shooter is finally getting a full release.

A Multiplayer To Be Enjoyed In The Same Room

As packed with space hamsters and other fun distractions as the adventure mode may be, the multiplayer is where Cobalt comes into its own. Battles take place across single screen arenas and it doesn't take many players to make the tight levels fill with hectic action. Cobalt supports eight-player games so there's lots of opportunities for chaos. However, thanks to the automatic bullet time, it should be easy to keep track of yourself throughout the maelstrom: if ever you're in significant danger, you'll get a fair shot at saving yourself.

There's a load of different modes to play across besides the bog-standard deathmatch. There's Capture the Plug – Cobalt's take on Capture the Flag – where your team must protect its own plug while stealing the enemy's. Bounty, a mode where you have to earn a certain amount of dosh to win, either by collecting it off the ground, or killing other players and stealing the money they'd collected from their freshly sparking robot corpse. And there's two sorts of Survival mode: Classic Survival, that sees you fending off a constantly spawning stream of enemies; and Wave Survival, which has the enemies attack in groups. Special waves are shuffled in with the normal attackers, so sometimes you will have to protect an NPC character from the AI, rush to kill a raid caller before he summons powerful reinforcements, or fight a powerful boss enemy.

The different multiplayer modes to play across are already many and multifarious. Just imagine how many there'll be once the modification maniacs set to work!

Need torches early in the game? Taking a couple from the buildings can help until you have the materials to make your own.

Villages usually have ready-made wheat farms ripe for harvesting. You'll be able to make bread in no time.

Check the blacksmithing house and you'll often find a chest filled with goodies (usually rare metals) for you to steal.

VILLAGE

With randomly created, fully-formed structures, villages are often the most exciting of the biomes to stumble into. They're inhabited by large-nosed villagers who happily go about their own business during the day. You can even trade with them in the PC and console versions, should you so desire. However, zombies will frequently invade during the night and knock down doors to infect the natives, so you'll have to fight to protect them or destroy the zombie spawn point. Not quite Resi 4's village scene, but close enough...

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GRAND MASTER

What could be better than a whole year of GamesMaster? And what a year we've got planned! We gave Mario a sneak peak of the issues ahead, and he's not stopped jumping for joy since.

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ICE PLAINS

You can get snow on hilltops and in colder regions in general, but you'll know a true tundra when you see it. Large, flat and near empty of food and life, staying alive may be quite a challenge. Oddly beautiful spikes of packed ice can form here, though these are incredibly rare. Water sources, such as rivers and sea levels, will also freeze over here.

You'll need a silk touch enchantment to harvest packed ice, and its use is fairly limited outside of building materials. The good news is it won't melt in sunlight, however.

It never rains, it pou... actually, it never rains but *snows* in this biome. We're not fans, if we're honest...

If you do need to cross an ice plains biome, even if just for exploratory purposes, it's worth setting up bases as you go and taking food with you. There's little to be found here, and these biomes are usually fairly expansive.

MINECRAFT MASTER

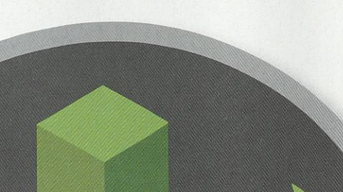
Blockbusting builds and beyond!

HOW TO SURVIVE HARDCORE DIFFICULTY

Tread carefully – there are no second chances here

#1 Risky business

The number one rule for being successful is never to take unnecessary risks. Have an escape route planned for any hazardous situation you may find.

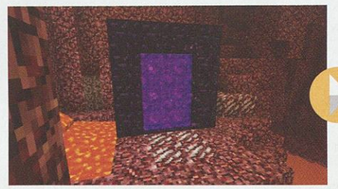


#2 Cave man

The safest place to build your base is underground, but make sure to light up dark corners with torches so you're not surprised by an unexpected creeper.

#3 Sleep year

Kill enough sheep on the first day to build a bed, and always snooze through the night – it's by far the most dangerous part of the game.



#4 Nether you mind

Don't set foot through a nether portal without a diamond sword, bow, iron armour, and a pickaxe. Once you've got what you need, get out again fast.

#5 Cavern brawl

By the time you're looking for dungeons, you should have a full set of enchanted weapons and tools. Build a safe mob grinder if you need more XP.

#6 End game

Before you leap through the End portal, you'll want diamond everything, potions of regeneration, and water buckets to fend off Endermen. Good luck!

The urge to grab a boatload of TNT blocks and stage our own recreation of that scene from Independence Day is pretty difficult to resist.

You could impale the Ender Dragon on this huge quartz recreation of the Washington Monument, which commemorates the first US president.

It might be tempting to dig up Lafayette Square and build a dirt shack, but you'll probably get nabbed by the secret service before you even begin.

STATE OF MINED

MASTER BUILD

Your ticket to the presidential pad

Ever fancied having a kip in the seat of power of the Western world? Finally, the president of the United States' very own crib can be yours. This Minecraft recreation – including the building itself, its grounds, Lafayette Square and the Washington Monument – is probably the closest that most people will ever get to stepping inside the real thing. The build is part of a recreation of Washington DC by BlueSheep123. "It isn't going to be exactly the same," he wrote on Reddit about his plans. "It's going to be like how GTA V is to Los Angeles." Now, where did I put my Minecraft Obama skin?

Kinetic pavements harvest energy from people's footsteps, converting it into power for streetlights, signposts and other roadside necessities.
Vertical farms allow far more crops to be grown on the same amount of land by stacking them on top of each other in skyscrapers.
Hydrogen-powered boats suck water from the canals and use solar power to turn it into zero-carbon fuel. The only emissions are water vapour.

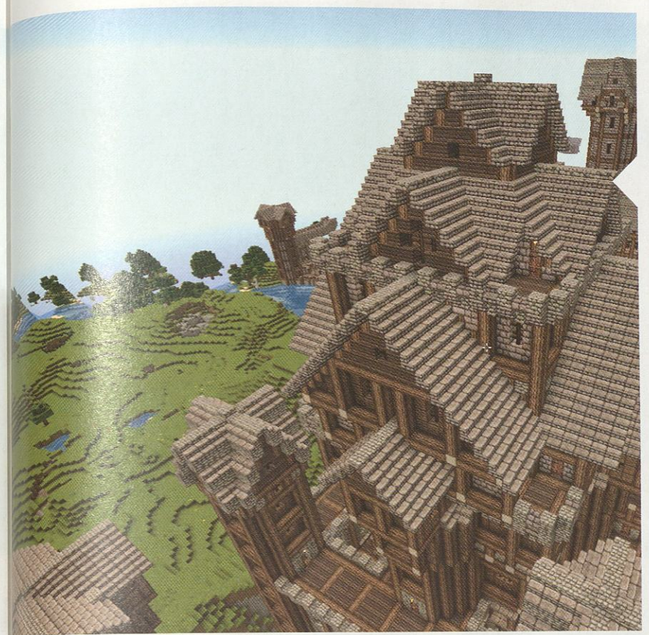
MASTER BUILD

IT AIN'T EASY BEING GREEN

The futuristic city that could save the world

When the Guardian newspaper wanted to construct a zero-carbon 'Climate Hope City' to show off the inventions that could rescue us from the effects of climate change, the budget didn't quite stretch to making it for real. So they commissioned Adam Clarke, Dragnoz and the Blockworks team to build it in Minecraft.

"This isn't a fantasy world, but a vision of a green urban environment that uses technologies that either already exist around the world, or are at the prototype stage," writes Keith Stuart, the Guardian's games editor. "You can freely explore the city, read signposts, and listen to audio recordings that tell you more about what each building and feature represents." Want to check it out for yourself? You can download it at: http://bit.ly/gmclimatehope



COMMUNITY CONSTRUCT

Nordic but nice

This medieval Scandinavian city has been in the works for about three years. It began as a castle, but expanded into the surrounding woods. "Today there is no forest left, everything is dense city," says its creator, JouwPF. He used wood, cobblestone and bricks, along with a custom resource pack, to capture a Northern European look.
JouwPF, Reddit

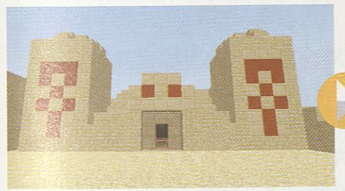
STEVE'S TRIVIA

"If a TNT block explodes just as an arrow passes by, then the projectile will be redirected away from the blast."

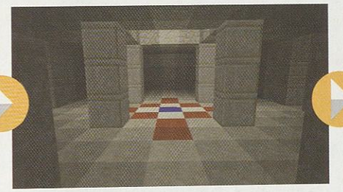
HOW TO

RAID DESERT AND JUNGLE TEMPLES

Avoid the traps and get out with all the loot



#1 Get your just deserts
These aren't too hard to track down. Roam through sandy biomes until you find a pyramid-shaped structure marked out with orange hieroglyphics.



#2 Clay time
In the centre is a block of blue clay. Don't mine it! Instead, go two blocks out and one to the side and mine down. You'll descend into a treasure chamber.

#3 It's a trap!
At the bottom is a pressure plate connected to nine TNT blocks. Loot the chests, and then, if you're brave, dig down and steal those boom-blocks.

#4 Tree will
It's much harder to find jungle temples, as they're often concealed by foliage. Slash and burn with a pair of shears – or flint and steel – to get to them.

#5 Switch way now?
Inside you'll find a puzzle. Flip the levers until the block on the temple's middle level disappears to reveal a chest. Or just break it with a pickaxe.

#6 Have a nice trip!
Be careful, there's a tripwire in the middle of the hall. Use shears to break it and raid the dispenser for free arrows. Then help yourself to the treasure!

ADVANCED BUILDING TECHNIQUES

Mastered the basics? Then crack your creative knuckles and attempt some advanced Minecrafting with these must-try builds.

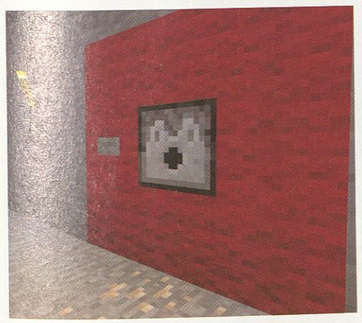
IMPROVE YOUR HOME WITH ITEM FRAMES

For the most part, item frames are purely decorative. Place one on a wall and you can display any item by placing it into the frame. It removes said item from your inventory, so it's not a great idea to plaster your house with pictures of diamonds unless you're rich. But an item frame's usage extends beyond showing off.

They're great for marking the contents of a chest or dispenser, or as a place to hang a functional, wall-mounted clock to let you know when it's safe to emerge from a mining session.

You can even rotate an item (by tapping the frame with right-click on PC). If you invite guests into your world, try creating signs by framing arrows and rotating them to point towards objects of interest in your universe.

MAKE THE MOST OUT OF DISPENSERS



Dispensers will dispense any item you place in them when activated by a button, lever or redstone circuit. In most cases, the dispenser will drop its cargo as a collectible item. However, some items dispense activated – arrows, spawn eggs, splash potions and enchanting bottles all work as if triggered by a player. The image over to the left shows a health station – a dispenser that fires out a healing splash potion whenever the button is pressed. And of course, if you're feeling sneaky on a multiplayer server, you could fill a wall of dispensers with TNT and then use a pressure plate and redstone circuit to create an explosive trap.

BUILD FRIENDLY GOLEMS

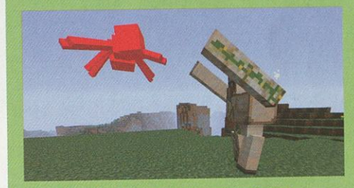
Make snowmen! Out of, er... iron!

HEART OF IRON

You'll find no better ally to protect your lands than the mighty Iron Golem, constructed by placing a pumpkin atop a T-shaped configuration of iron blocks. Obviously. Unlike most craftables in Minecraft, you actually do this in the world rather than in the comfort of your own lair.

HEAVY METAL

Iron golems have a staggering 50 hearts – if anyone is being escorted here, it's you. Their attacks also do enough damage to kill many basic monsters in a single hit. On the downside, they move about as quickly as you would expect a big heavy metal thing to move.



FRIENDS TO THE DOWNTRODDEN

Iron Golems can also naturally spawn in NPC villages of sufficient size. They will wander around town and make an effort to protect the otherwise defenceless villagers from attacking monsters. These particular golems are loyal to their village and won't follow you, though.

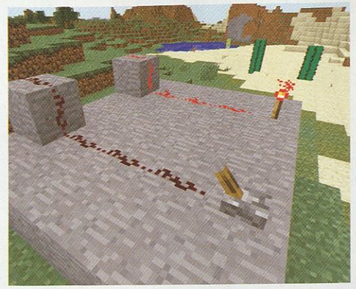
BUILT TO LAST

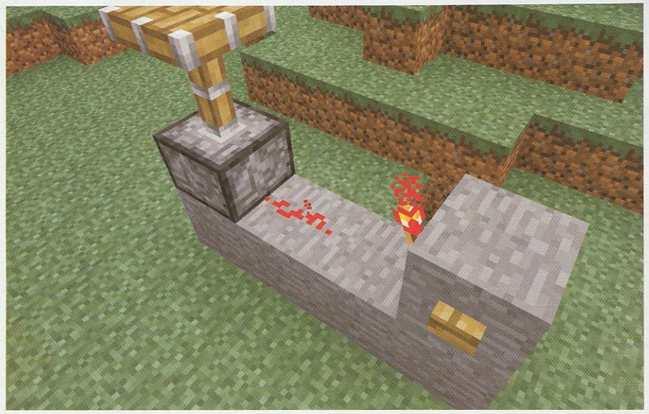
Iron Golems are completely immune to falling damage and drowning, further increasing their potential uses. They can still take damage from lava and fire, however, and can easily become stuck at the bottom of deep bodies of water. Bless 'em.

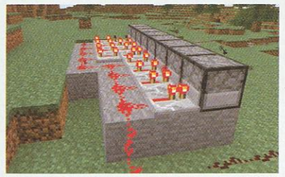
BUILD WITH REDSTONE

1 WIRES

Redstone is a powerful tool, and deceptively simple to use. The basic idea: the ore you mine underground can be placed directly onto rocks to create a wire. That wire can be powered with switches, or the always-on redstone torch, to carry a signal capable of activating doors, machinery and powered minecart rails. If this is your first attempt, don't go in with a grand design for some elegant automation. Just load up Creative mode, fill your inventory with items from the Redstone tab, then start connecting stuff on the ground and watching how it interacts. Experiment!







2 SWITCHES

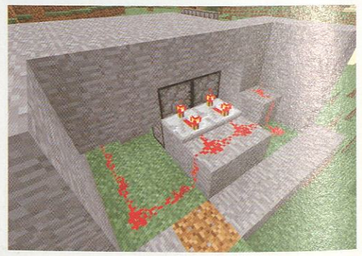
Your basic switch types are as follows: buttons create short signal pulses; levers toggle signals on or off; and, pressure plates create signals when you step on them. Switches also let you create logic circuits with redstone torches. For a simple NOT gate, lead your wire to a torch and put a button on a block next to it. Press the button to deactivate the torch and disable the circuit.

3 REPEATER

A signal will only travel through 15 blocks of redstone wire before it runs out of power. For more involved projects, you'll need to boost that signal — placing repeaters at intervals along the wire to extend the circuit. Repeaters also let you time activations by delaying the signal that passes through them. You can use this to activate machines in a sequence. Imagine a huge gauntlet of dispensers firing arrows in a line, activated by a pressure plate triggered by an unsuspecting player... Now go build it!

4 HIDING YOUR CIRCUIT

This is where things can become tricky. When it comes to not showing your circuit's workings you have to expect some trial and error, as it's all too easy to accidentally break a circuit. While you're building cover, a good tip is to temporarily connect the circuit to a piston, then use a redstone torch to lock it into an active state. If you accidentally cut the connection, the circuit will deactivate and the loud, unmistakable sound of the piston contracting will warn you that something in the contraption is messed up.



GETTING THE MOST OUT OF PISTONS

Hidden uses uncovered

At their most basic, pistons push any block placed next to them when charged with a redstone signal. They come in two types: regular pistons just push, while sticky pistons also pull the attached block when the signal is deactivated. But there are quirks to the way they function. For starters, they won't push 'heavy' blocks such as obsidian and bedrock. Pistons also link, so stack two and both will activate when a signal is run through the top.

On their own, pistons aren't particularly useful. It's when they're combined with clever redstone circuits that they enable some amazing creations. For instance, you can easily create a hidden door with a 2x2 wall of sticky pistons — here's how:

Place some stone in front of the left side of your sticky piston wall, and another two sticky pistons — which we'll call your third piston column — on the right, facing the stone. Connect repeaters, and set them on a small delay. Then, place another repeater — this time with no delay — in the space where your third piston column will be pushed.

Connect it all up with one redstone wire, and hook it to a lever. When activated, the piston wall pushes both your stone and piston, which activates the third piston column, pushing the stone in another direction. Now just build a wall here, and when you deactivate the lever, the stone retracts, revealing your hidden door.

BOOST YOUR LEVEL WITH AN XP FARM

Properly utilised, XP farms allow you to easily boost 10 to 20 levels in one mammoth session of death and punching. The downside is that, in survival mode, even the simplest design requires careful planning to pull off.

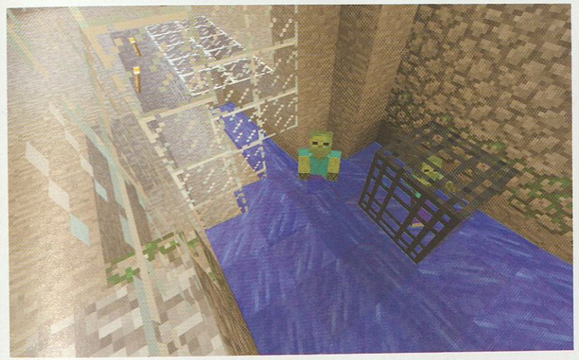
First, you'll need to find a dungeon – the mossy, underground rooms containing a chest and monster spawner. Disable the spawner by surrounding it with torches, then block off any surrounding cave passages to stop surprise attacks while you work. Clear the dungeon of any extra blocks and chests, then dig out the floor two blocks deep. Your goal is a completely empty room with the spawner suspended in the middle.

Now place water in each corner of the back wall. Depending on the size of the dungeon, the water should flood most of the floor. For any blocks not drenched, dig another level down, then remove the blocks diagonally from this dip, where the water is at its thinnest.

At this point, your floor should be entirely flooded. If you stand inside the dungeon, the water will push you towards the centre of the front wall. Keep mining along where the water is pushing you – creating a three-block-deep trench leading out of the dungeon. Keep going until the water stops. Where the water ends, create a 22-block-deep 1x1 pit. This is where the spawning mobs will fall down, allowing you to easily finish them off. Just be careful you don't fall into an existing cave or lava pool.

Once at the bottom, prepare your killing room. Dig out a small, well-lit area, just below your pit. You want to leave a one-block space at head height separating you from where the mobs drop. Now dig back up to your chamber, using ladders to give you an easy route up and down. Remove the torches from the dungeon, quickly seal up the walls and cover over the trench. You'll need to stay close to the dungeon – mob spawners only work when you're in a 16-block radius – but after a while, pop down to the killing floor and get to the punching.

If you plan it properly you'll have an inexhaustible farm of experience at your disposal. How could you be so cruel?



USE SPAWN EGGS TO CREATE GAUNTLETS

Spawn eggs are special eggs used for spawning mobs. Place them like any other block, (right-clicking your mouse over the highlighted area to create the desired animal on PC). They're only available in creative mode, and keep in mind that monsters still won't spawn in peaceful difficulty. You can also place spawn eggs inside dispensers, which will spawn the relevant mob when activated. Just hook them up to a lever that also activates an iron door and you can create extra-hard gauntlets to run through with friends, Adventure Time-style.

ADVANCED GAME MODES

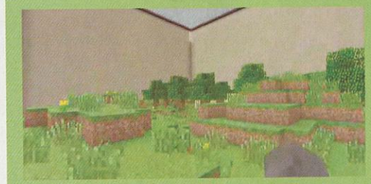
The best new ways to play on PC

HUNGER GAMES

Players start in a circle around a cache of weapons and armour. When the countdown ends, it's a scramble to grab the best loot, then dash off into the wilderness to hunt and be hunted. See it in action: http://bit.ly/gmhunger

THE DROPPER

A series of vast chambers, the name of this map tells you everything you need to know: you're at the top, the exit is right at the bottom, the only way down is to drop and dodge. Get it at: http://bit.ly/gmdropper



THE WALLS

Another PvP map, this sees four players each choose a chamber separated by sand walls. You get 15 minutes to craft your way to the best survival gear, at which point the walls start tumbling. Find servers at: http://bit.ly/gmwalls

MINECRAFT ENDER GAME

The ender dragon is Minecraft's toughest test. Want to slay it? Then simply follow our ten-point guide...

1 BEFORE YOU GO
Once you reach The End, there's no going back until you've defeated the ender dragon. You'll need enchanted weapons and armour, strength and health potions, some cheap building materials, and a *lot* of arrows.

2 FINDING THE STRONGHOLD
You need at least 12 eyes of ender – crafted with an ender pearl and blaze powder. Throw an eye into the air and it'll float before hitting the floor: the direction it floats is the direction in which you'll need to travel to reach the stronghold.

3 END PORTAL
Head to the stronghold and search for the end portal. You'll find it toward the bottom, suspended over a pool of lava and protected by a silverfish spawner. Pop your ender eyes into each slot of the portal and it'll activate.

4 THE END
Take care when you enter: you spawn on a small obsidian platform, under or beside the main End island. Dig your way to the top or build a platform across. The ender dragon *shouldn't* attack until you reach the surface.

5 DEALING WITH ENDERMEN
The End is teeming with endermen, and they can make a would-be dragonslayer's life hell. Pumpkin hats waste a valuable armour slot, so dump a water bucket on the ground near to a group to de-aggro them.

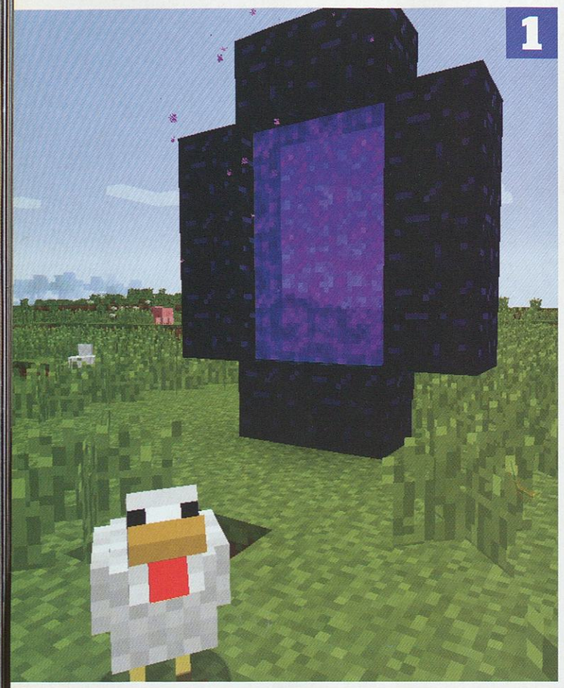
6 SOMEWHERE TO HIDE
You may find that your first scuffle with The End's draconian dictator doesn't go quite as planned. So make sure you dig a nice safe area to fall back to with healing items and enough supplies to repair your gear.

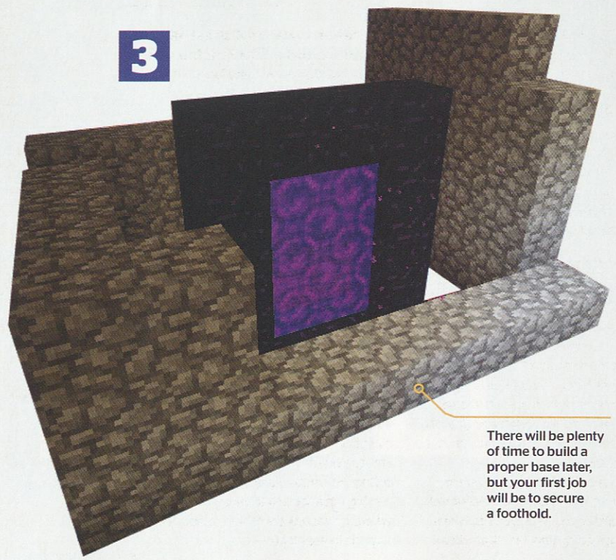
7 HEALING CRYSTALS
Each main obsidian pillar contains an ender crystal. They're your first target. Their purple rays heal the ender dragon, so killing him while they're active is impossible. Luckily, they're fragile. A few well-aimed arrows should do it.

8 CAGED CRYSTALS
Two crystals are sneakily encased behind iron bars, stopping you from taking them out at range. So you can jump-stack your way to the top of a pillar and find that you can easily knock down the barrier.

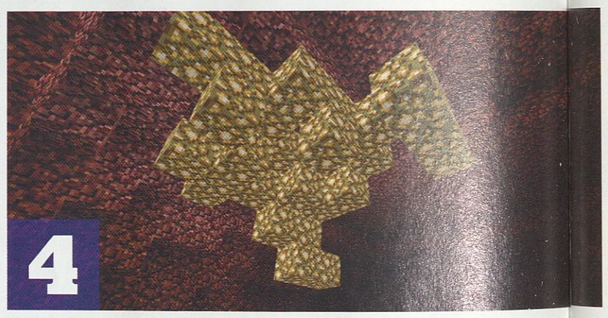
6 ACID ATTACK
The ender dragon has two attacks. His long-range acid ball is easy to avoid and – if you're wearing enchanted armour – not too harmful. His second, an acid spray, is much more deadly. So keep moving and dodging.

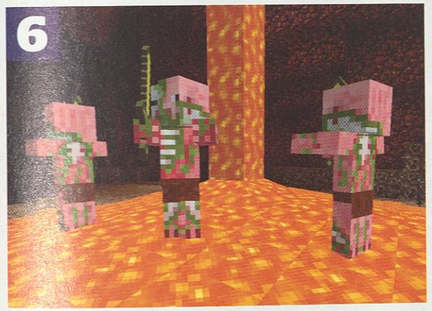
10 FINISH HIM
After circling the pillars a few times, the ender dragon will stop and hover over the centre of the island. Now's your chance to pelt him with arrows! A purple explosion will eventually signal your victory.

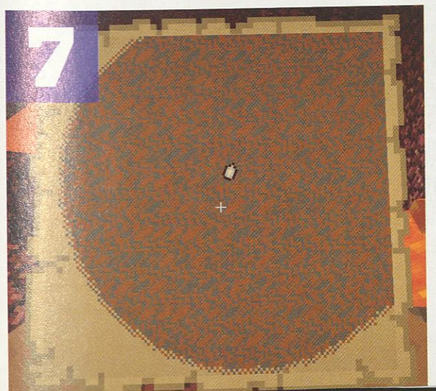




There will be plenty of time to build a proper base later, but your first job will be to secure a foothold.







NETHER SURRENDER

Getting brick rolled? We're nether gonna desert you! How to thrive in the nether!

1

Before you start, you'll need to gather the materials to construct a nether portal to get there. You'll need at least ten obsidian blocks to build a frame two blocks wide and three blocks high. If you're finding it difficult to gather the necessary amount of obsidian, consider farming some of your own by pouring a bucket of water over a prepared pit of lava. You'll need a diamond pick to get at it, though. Once the frame is built, set fire to one of the bottom two blocks by using a flint and steel and a glowing purple portal will open...

2 **...but hold on to your creepers you lava fiend, you! Before you delve block-deep into hell, make sure you're well stocked up with supplies. We're talking about food. Bread or cookies will do the trick. Bring loads of suitably blast-resistant building materials, such as cobblestone, too. Armour and tools are also a must, but leave rarer diamond gear at home.**

3 As soon as you get through, prepare to defend your portal on the other side. This is your ticket out of here! It's a good idea to bring extra obsidian and a flint and steel just in case you need to build another portal to escape. Which is very probable. Protect the portal on the nether side by building walls of cobblestone around it, leaving room to manoeuvre. Use a flame proof iron door to keep out mobs and ghastly fireballs.

4 **So you've made it into the nether and you're surrounded on all sides by fire, lava, hostile mobs and grunting pigmen. We'll get to the mobs in a bit, but for now you might be asking: why in Notch's name did I even come here?**

There are loads of materials that can only be found in the nether. Glowstone dust, used to boost potion effects when brewing, can be found here, as can nether quartz ore, which is enormously useful for redstone circuitry. It's also a good idea to gather some soul sand while you're here (it's the stuff that slows you down when you walk across it), as this can be used to farm nether wart. This can also be harvested in the nether, and is used for cooking up awkward potions, an important ingredient for starting out when attempting to craft higher grade potions.

5 Another reason to brave the nether, though something you'll want to leave off tackling until you're a little more familiar with its fiery dangers, is that it allows for fast travel across the overworld.

For every one block you travel in the nether, you'll have moved eight blocks up above. Build a system of nether portals and you'll be able to travel extreme distances across your map really quickly.

If you do need to build bridges over the huge lava pools, make sure they're covered and have walls/fences on either side. Mobs here have frightening knockback abilities...

6

Right, enough with the passive stuff. How can you not only survive, but thrive in the nether? *With caution*. Zombie pigmen are of little concern as they're passive and won't attack unless provoked. Ghasts will likely be the most immediate threat. Bring a bow and arrow to take them out, or batter their fireballs back at them with well-timed blocks.

Find a nether fortress and you'll have to deal with blazes. Consider bringing some snowballs along, as these actually do decent damage to them.

Up against a wither skeleton? Good luck! These fast-moving mobs are tough, speedy and deal ridiculous damage. They're three blocks tall, though, so hastily building low corridors will enable you to block them off.

7 A final few words of warning. Many items that you may use regularly topside simply won't function as you might expect down here. Water from buckets (which would be useful considering how likely it is that you'll catch fire) will instantly evaporate into hissing steam. *Great.*

Maps, though still useful for general navigation, won't show the environment, only the constant texture of the Nether's ceiling. Also, your player marker will spin, making it harder to tell where you are. Whatever you do: don't place a bed! It'll just explode in your face.

HARDCORE MODE BEATEN

Minecraft's most intense play mode got you on the ropes? We'll help you survive — and thrive — with our essential tips and techniques...

ardcore mode is one of the most unforgiving challenges in all gaming, let alone just Minecraft, as it locks the difficulty to the highest setting and gives you just one life to live throughout. Any misstep or misjudged situation can mean hours and hours of lost progress, though on the flipside, securing victory through The End is an epic accomplishment that justifies the immense hardship preceding it. Feel free to 3D print a trophy for yourself, you deserve it.

Hardcore mode is definitely not a place to learn the ropes of Minecraft, though, and players are urged to log many, many hours in standard Survival mode first — and not just on Easy or Normal. That simply won't cut it.

Become a knowledgeable and resourceful player in Survival before attempting Hardcore and you'll have a dramatically better experience. But whatever your skill level may be coming into the mode, it never hurts to have a helping hand. So here are several invaluable tips for making the most of a Hardcore play attempt. Good luck!

ALWAYS BE AWARE

Death comes swiftly in Hardcore mode, and unlike in Survival, there's no going back. Once you perish, your only option is to delete the world and start all over, which can be a very painful experience if you've logged hours bulking up your arsenal and building structures all over it.

As such, you can really never be too careful. Constantly scan your surroundings for enemies, whether you're wandering in the evening, or exploring caves. Creepers are the most imminent threat, as they'll sneak up from behind and detonate before you even see them. It's always advised to play with the sound on at some perceptible level so you can hear the scuttling of incoming mobs. Be careful where you walk and mine, too, as it's easy to stroll into danger.

DON'T JUMP THE GUN

Hardcore mode is extremely difficult, and for that reason, you might want to push yourself to 'complete' it — by entering The End and vanquishing its boss — as soon as humanly possible. Now hold up, there! There's no reason to throw your life away so quickly. And you will.

There's a lot to do first — the punishing nature of the mode is exactly the reason why you should be as prepared as possible before making the leap. Constantly being on edge and keeping an eye out for mobs is gruelling (take a break and look away from the screen now and then – your eyes will thank you), but it's a lot more bearable than the beasts you'll face in The End, or even The Nether. They're more ready for you than you are for them.

You'll need to be incredibly well stocked up on gear before attempting that last segment, with both a bow and a diamond sword recommended, plus at least iron armour for the entire body. You'll also want various beneficial potions and higher-quality food such as steak or a golden apple or carrot.

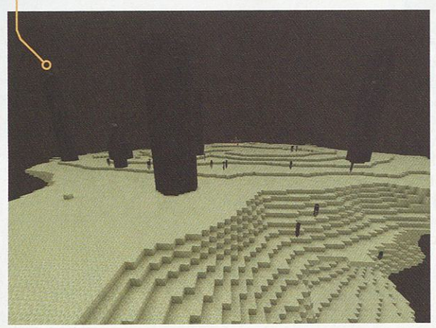
Ultimately, you only have a single shot to pull this off, otherwise you'll lose potentially dozens of hours in the process.

There's a recurring mantra to playing Hardcore mode, and it's a familiar one: you're much better safe than sorry. Remember that. There are times when you'll have to take risks to save your skin, but for the most part it's best to play deliberately and take your time gearing up before facing down The End and the Ender Dragon.

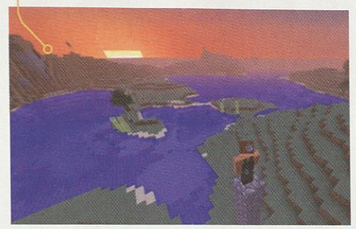
Everything suggested in this guide is in service of that careful play style, so take it all to heart, and write notes if necessary. Don't eat and you'll die young. Climb too high and you might fall too far. Forget your bucket of water and you might land too hard.

It's an arduous journey, but if you play smart and consider each action thoughtfully, it will hopefully end with both an amazing story and sense of accomplishment. And if not you can always try again.

It's The End! And if you get this far, it'll soon be the end of you, too. Kudos if you *do* get this far – it's not an easy thing to do.



Having cobblestone handy can create a quick safe zone in a pinch. It *will* save your life.



OPTIMISE YOUR HOTBAR

Things can get messy in a hurry in Hardcore mode, and whatever the situation, you'll want to be sure that you can react accordingly without flipping through menus. You will most assuredly die if you're not prepared at all times. As such, it's absolutely imperative that your is hotbar always filled with the most essential tools and items. When you have a moment of safe downtime, quickly run through your inventory and prioritise items you might need in a heartbeat.

You'll want your sword, tools such as axes and pickaxes, a stack of blocks for building (such as the very useful cobblestone) and plugging lava leaks, torches, food, and a water bucket handy. And since you're not coming back to life if you get yourself killed, there's no point in storing rare gear in a shelter. Carry your best stuff with you at all times, and make sure it's handy for any encounter.

Imagine how beautiful the sights must be from up there! No really, just imagine.

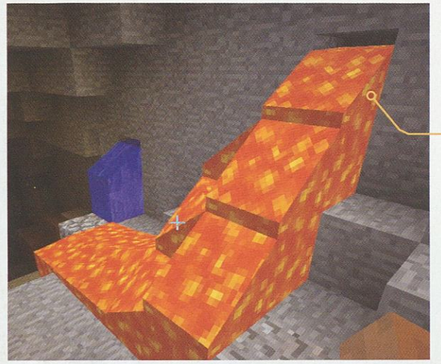
WATCH YOUR STEP!

See that towering cliff jutting several dozen blocks up from the surface level? As tempting as it is to climb up there and take in the pixelated sunset, or to start building a small fortress to survive the evenings or survey your domain, resist the urge. One misstep can lead to a deadly drop to a pixelated doom so, if you can help it, stay away from elevated locales. You don't need that high-rise home overseeing all the land, and it's not worth the risk of an accidental fall while you scamper from mobs in a panicked hurry, either.

On that same note, when descending from a high point or rushing into a cave, be sure to take small steps to prevent steadily taking damage from mid-range falls. Also, don't sprint at all unless you're evading danger—it's more difficult to see hazards if you're dashing about willy-nilly, and you'll deplete your hunger meter faster. Seriously. Stop it.

Finally, never dig straight down while mining. You might wind up in a pool of lava or surrounded by a mob, and you really don't want that to happen.

If you see some sweet resources straight below, carefully find a way to approach it from the side. Slow down and think before you dig or else you'll die in minutes.



Lava is not your friend, so always carry a water bucket, just in case.

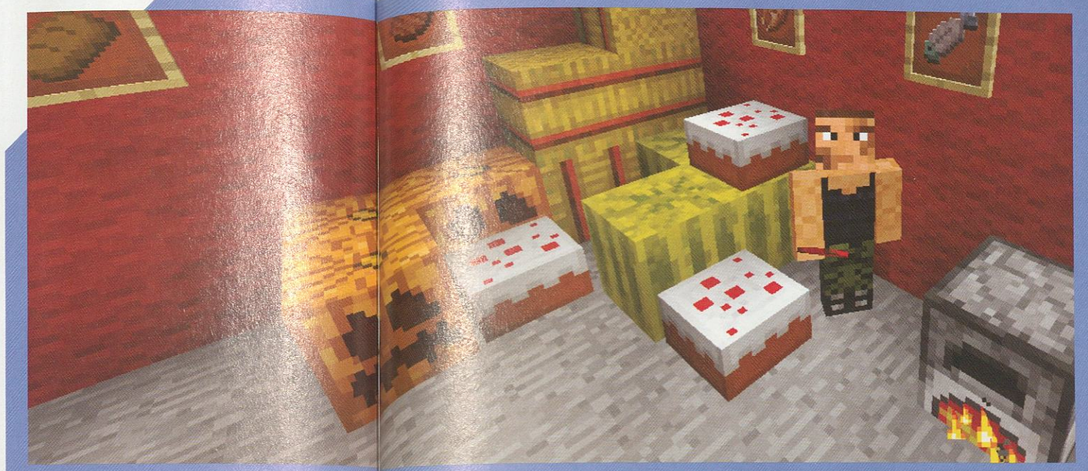
Not only a deadly zombie, but one that's also on fire! Eeeek!

A WATER BUCKET?

Yes, really. Craft at least one (preferably a few) by placing three iron ingots in a "U" shape on the lower rows of the crafting table interface and then fill it up with H^2O. Keep this odd little tool handy in your hotbar, and if you have a mouse with extra buttons in reach, consider mapping it to one of those as well.

Why is the water bucket so essential? Simply put, it can provide a softer landing when faced with an accidental fall, kind of like a circus performer diving into a paddling pool. Plummeting to your death? Then whip out your trusty bucket of water and splash a block of water below – you'll have a better chance of seeing another day. Minecraft has a very special brand of logic, doesn't it?

Water is also handy should you suddenly encounter lava while mining, as you can harden the molten rock and save yourself a lot of potential trouble.



EAT AND REPLENISH

Keeping your hunger meter full is absolutely essential in Hardcore mode. With far more aggressive enemies on the prowl and only one life in total, you'll want the ability to regenerate health at all times. Letting your hunger build eliminates that option, and may ultimately lead to your untimely demise.

In the first couple of days, feel free to rely on meat accumulated from killing nearby livestock, but if you're making a serious Hardcore attempt, you'll need grub for the long haul. It's definitely in your best interest to take up farming of wheat and/or vegetables, or to fence in some livestock and get them to breed. Better yet, do both and use any excess veggies to help breed the animals. There's no such thing as too many supplies.

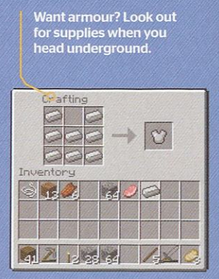
BE A PACKRAT

In Survival mode, you can afford to toss seemingly unnecessary items in most scenarios. That's not a luxury you can afford in Hardcore mode, however, as you never know when you might need an item – and more pressingly, when you might come across it again. Seriously, hold on to everything if you can, and use chests to store items that may come in handy down the line. One man's junk can be that same man's treasure under very different circumstances.

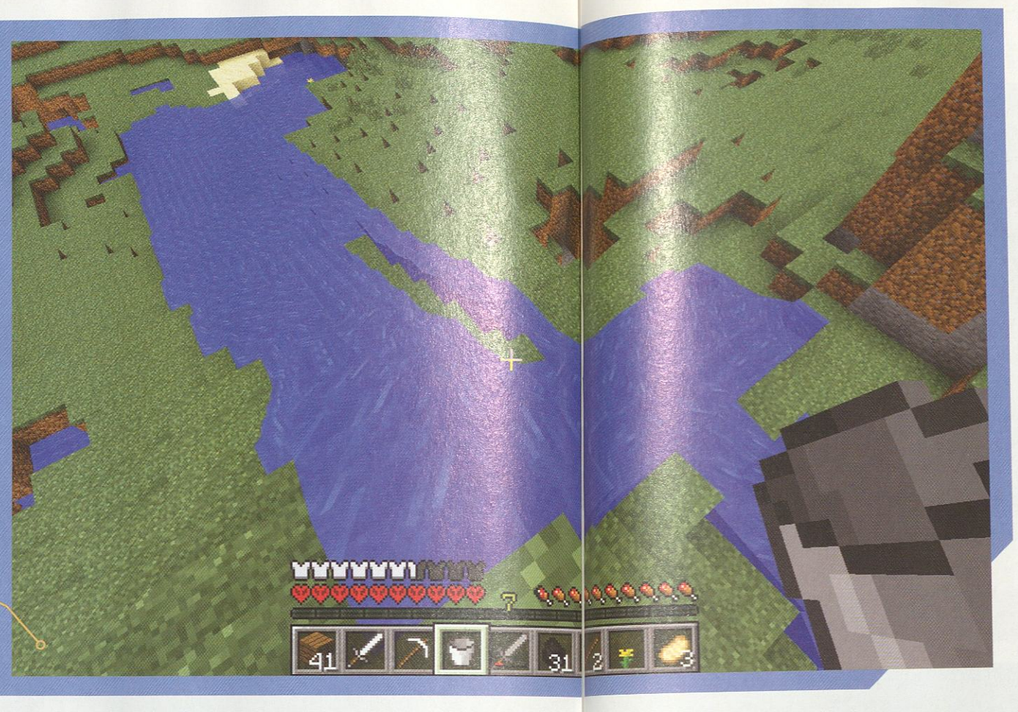
STAY UNDERGROUND

You'll probably spend a large chunk of time in Hardcore mode beneath the surface, hunting for diamonds and other rare minerals to significantly improve your gear. Not only is it a meaningful pursuit in that regard, but it's also smart to burrow somewhere deep and out of the way to avoid the surface at night.

Find an intriguing spot to start digging, barricade the entrance behind you to protect your six, and start pushing downwards, across, or wherever you see fit. So long as you're ready to deal with the odd foe or surprise lava puddle, you'll survive a lot longer underground than you will battling back the mobs. Leave yourself an opening in your barricade to see the outside world, and check back every so often to find out when it's safe to emerge once more.



Want armour? Look out for supplies when you head underground.



It's nice out here, but always retire to your cave come nightfall to remain safe.

TEAM UP

To borrow a phrase from the TV series Lost: "Live together, die alone." Look, you're probably going to die in Hardcore mode at some point, but you'll have a better chance of pushing that out into the future by playing online with friends. Pals can help you amass resources, watch your back while you're mining, and even add a bit of brute force when you're battling of the mobs in the moonlight. Maybe it's a badge of honour to play through strictly on your own, but we bet you'll trade honour for survival when the going gets tough.

PROTECT YOURSELF

Just as important as keeping yourself fed is making sure that you're well armoured throughout your Hardcore attempt. Leather armour can be created fairly quickly, but doesn't provide much lasting protection. Gold and chainmail armour offer a bit more shielding from attacks, although iron is probably your safest bet, as it delivers a great extra layer of protection while not being terribly difficult to cobble together. Diamond armour is the best in every category, especially durability, but those resources are scarce. Whatever you choose, be sure to replace busted armour as needed so you're not taking excess damage.

Another great way to keep yourself safe? Tame wolves by feeding them bones. They'll follow you around the world and assault any nearby attackers, making them like a secondary, roving form of armour. Plus, it's nice to have companions – Hardcore mode can be a very lonely place at times.

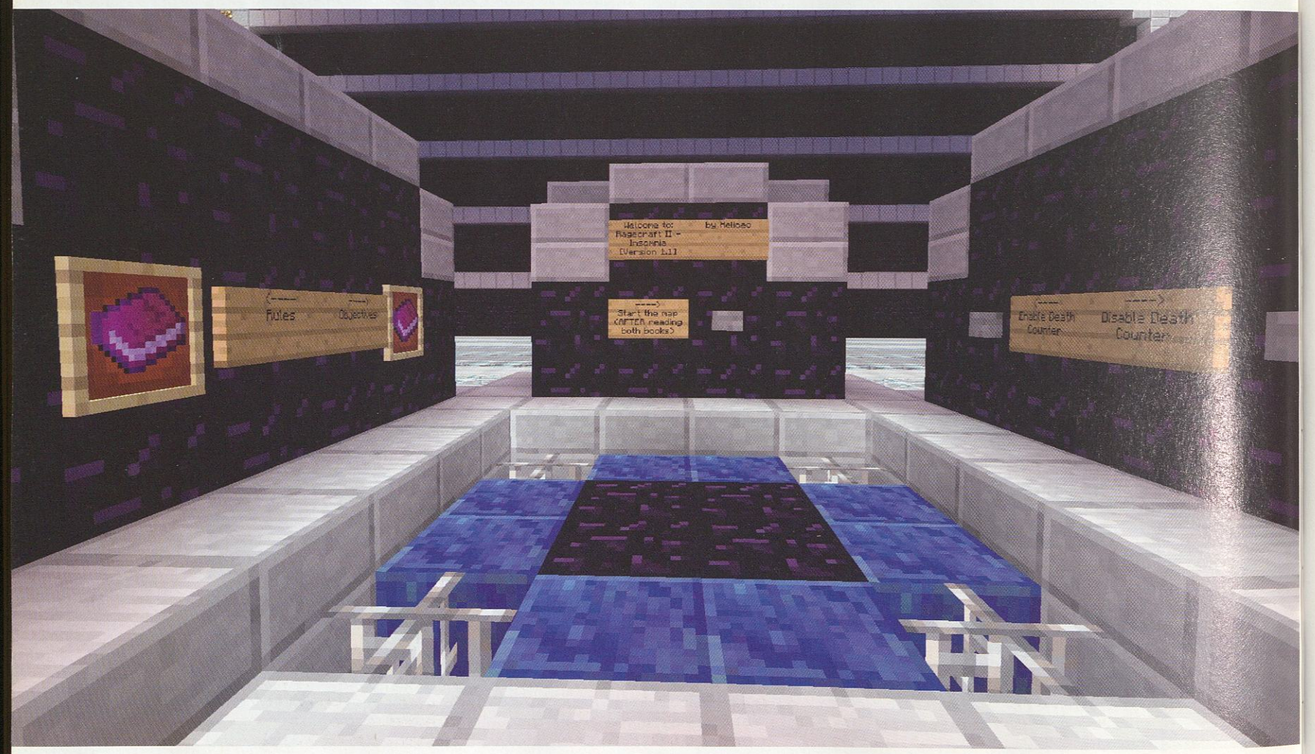
Wolves can be tamed and recruited with lovely bones.

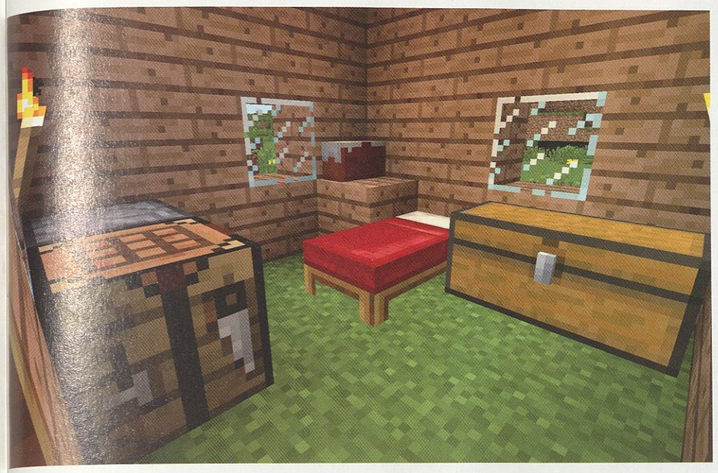
You'll need a crafting table and furnace to cobble together weapons and tools.

HOW TO

BEAT MINECRAFT'S HARDEST MAPS

Survival tips for Complete The Monument maps, said to be Minecraft's ultimate challenge.


Welcome to: Minecraft II - Insomnia [Version 3.1] By: Melinoe
Rules
Objectives
Start the map (AFTER reading both books)
Enable Death Counter
Disable Death Counter



BUILDING A CAMP

Okay, you're using the right version. You've read the rules. What now? If there's a chest near your spawn, make sure to collect everything you can carry. If you can, take the chest as well. Just like at your real house, storage space is always useful. Your first job is to set up a base camp from which you can venture out into the world. The best place to make camp is near the monument itself. That's the central point of the world, and a place you'll be returning to often.

Build your camp the way you'd build any shelter: ensuring it's well lit and safe from monsters. If you can, fence off the area to ensure you can work any farms or crops you might build without fear of a surprise attack. Take your time, and don't be tempted to head out until you're fully prepared. Complete The Monument map dungeons are some of the most difficult you're going to face, and so proper preparation is the key to survival.

As with any Minecraft home, your base camp should contain a crafting table, chests and a furnace. You'll also want a bed so you can respawn in safety should anything unfortunate happen while you're gathering materials.

READ THE RULES

We know, right? The whole point of most Complete The Monument maps is that they give you more freedom than adventure maps. But, as with any community-made thing, even these maps are designed to provide a specific experience. Following the map's rules will help you get the most out of that experience, even if it's just making sure that you're using the suggested difficulty setting.

More than that, the map's readme file or installation instructions will tell you what version of Minecraft to use. While maps will still work with the current version, they're often balanced around the features available at the time the map was created. If you're using the PC version of Minecraft, you can rollback to an older version through the launcher. Create a new profile, and, in the editor, click the 'User Version' drop down list to select the map's preferred setting.

Oh, and no. You can't use dyes to create your own coloured wool blocks. That's just cheating!

MAKING FOOD

To complete your base camp, you'll need a reliable source of food. While carrots and potatoes make for an easy-to-plant crop farm, they can be difficult to find. Wheat seeds are easier to harvest, although the crop must be made into bread before it can be consumed. The benefit of either carrots or wheat is that they can be used to breed pigs or cows respectively.

Ultimately, you'll want an animal farm. Cooked meat replenishes a large portion of your hunger bar, and can be essential to surviving dungeons. Create a fenced-off area in your base camp, and should you come to a cow, pig or mooshroom, use either wheat or a carrot to lure them back to your pen. With two or more, you can start breeding, ensuring a healthy herd that can provide a large supply of tasty life-giving meat.

WINNING A FIGHT

If you're running through corridors, you're always in danger of being overwhelmed by mobs. Even the odds by using cobblestone to create a blockade. Create a single-block high barrier at about head height across the entire width of the corridor. Not only will monsters not be able to reach you – giving you time to rest and recover – but you'll be able to take them out in safety by attacking their feet with your melee weapons. Once you've cleared out an area, you can break down the barrier and push further in, setting up a new blockade as more enemies appear.

PACKING UP

Congratulations, you've got a fully functioning base camp. That's just the first step, though. Now you'll need to actually head into the world, tackling the map's dungeons and challenges for those precious blocks of wool. If you're heading into a dangerous area, you're better off travelling light. You will most probably die attempting to complete a CTM map's hardest areas, and losing lots of equipment and materials can be a big setback.

Make sure you have the following: a couple of swords, pickaxes and bows, a bunch of arrows and torches, some armour, a bucket, flint and steel, and any potions you may have found or brewed – particularly health or regeneration potions. A stack of cheap building blocks like dirt or cobblestone can also be useful. If you have a long distance to travel before reaching the dungeon, consider bringing a bed. You can always create a small outpost at the entrance, giving you a forward spawn point away from the main base.

STEADY AS YOU GO

CTM makers love filling their dungeons with large, dark areas, or rooms filled with spawners. Remember: you're free to craft and destroy at will, and slowly turn the situation to your advantage. Illuminate areas with torches as you travel through them, both to ensure that no mobs can spawn behind you, and to mark out the zones that you've previously travelled through.

If you're dealing with spawners, consider tunnelling towards them to disable them from below. Either that, or fill your bucket with lava and use this to clear out a room in relative safety. You don't have kill every enemy in a fair fight. Be creative!

WATCH OUT FOR TRAPS

Mind where you're walking. If you're in a room filled with sand or gravel, it probably means that it's a trap. Place a block or torch on the surface and the entire room could fall away into a monster trap, or, worse, a lava pit. Always know the quickest exit route, and, if you do have to place a block, try to jump onto it as it's placed. If you use dirt or cobblestone, it will hang in the air – letting you build a bridge back to safety. Another devious trick involves silverfish. Map makers will sometimes create corridors full of silverfish eggs. Break one, and the critter will attack you. Hit it, and more will spawn until you're overrun. The best defence is to kill it instantly to avoid triggering new spawn – either with a fully charged bow, or by setting it on fire.

ESCAPE THAT ROOM

Ugh, mazes are the worst. And CTM mapmakers love them. You'll find a few bedrock mazes along your travels, and many will be filled with ample amounts of monster spawners and other nasty things. To get through them, pick the left or right side and simply hug the wall as you travel your way around – placing torches as you go. It'll take a while, but you'll make it eventually.

Don't worry too much about the monsters, either. They're also pretty bad at mazes. They get confused by all the corners, letting you easily attack them while they're stuck in a corner, aimlessly hopping at a wall.

THE BEST COMPLETE THE MONUMENT MAPS

A top five countdown of our favourite CTM adventures...

5 UNCHARTED TERRITORY III

A beautiful and massive map from Amlup's Uncharted Territory series. It starts out relatively gently, but gets progressively harder as you go along. The map features custom monsters, and has plenty of hidden traps to avoid as you journey across the world in search of the 16 coloured wool blocks.

The standout moment has got to be the Hypercharged section. It's an obsidian maze absolutely packed full of creeper spawners. That would be bad enough, but many of these creepers have been souped-up to be faster and even more deadly than ever. It can be tough going, especially if you're playing solo. Luckily, their massive explosions will help destroy spawners.

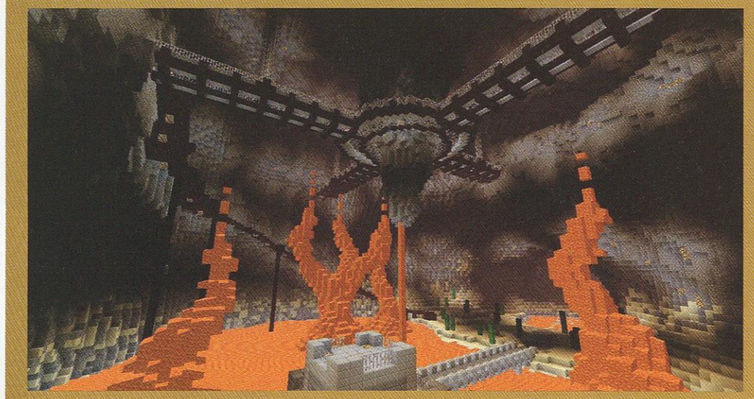
www.bit.ly/MineCTM1

4 FROM ASHES

Never mind survival, From Ashes is just an all-around great map to gaze at in wonder. It's set in a post-apocalyptic world, and features a giant, open map filled with the ruins of a once great civilisation. To get the most out of From Ashes, you should use the included texture pack. It really makes the environment feel like a world gone wrong.

There is, of course, still a vast number of things to do there. There are 16 trap-filled dungeons to conquer, custom loot to find, unique mobs to kill, story books to find and villagers to trade with. Wowsers!

www.bit.ly/MineCTM2



3 RAGECRAFT 2: INSOMNIA

Ragecraft does things you wouldn't think possible in a Minecraft map. Like Uncharted Territory, it's got custom monsters, but the difference here is that they're tied to some truly terrifying moments. It's a combat-focused map, but with a twisted emphasis on horror and hallucinations.

The stand out section comes during a dungeon called Fear Of The Dark. You're told that when "it" happens, you need to hide. It refers to a shrill shriek, and temporary blindness for your character. When it happens, make sure you're safely locked away in a room to the side, or the ghostly apparitions will instantly get you.

www.bit.ly/MineCTM3

2 SPELLBOUND CAVES

Vechs' Super Hostile Series helped popularise the CTM map genre. As the name suggests, they're punishingly difficult – offering up plenty of tough challenges for adventuring experts. Spellbound Caves is probably the easiest to get started with, although it's still harder than most maps you'll encounter. There are 10 dungeons to tackle, each filled with potions and enchanted loot.

Be particularly wary of the University of Arcane Enchantments, which contains blaze and ghast spawners that can quickly get out of hand. Bring buckets filled with water and, if you can find the ingredients, try brewing up some fire resistance potions.

www.bit.ly/MineCTM4

1 DIVERSITY

Diversity works slightly differently to other CTM maps. Rather than a survival-based adventure through multiple dungeons, each of Diversity's rooms is diverse... er, varied. It's a best-of collection of map types, with every room taking you to a different type of Minecraft map. For instance, there's a map inspired by Dropper, in which you must fall elegantly past a series of hazards. You'll also find a huge parkour challenge, a boss room, a puzzle map and, yes, a survival challenge.

If you want to complete Diversity, you'll need to be an expert at every kind of challenge that Minecraft can offer.

www.bit.ly/MineCTM5

THE END

The ultimate challenge for vanilla Minecraft survivalists, The End biome is as hard to reach as it is to survive... almost.

To get there you'll need to search out a stronghold in the overworld. This is best done by flinging an eye of ender into the air and following its airborne trajectory. Once you find a stronghold and the ender portal that resides within, you have to activate it with 12 more eyes of ender to reach The End.

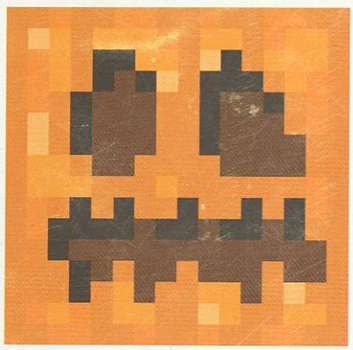
There's no day/night cycle here, and aside from a massive increase in enderman spawns, you also have the small matter of an ender dragon to contend with.

The End is one of the most hostile places in the whole game. To avoid endermen hassle, equip a pumpkin head to cover up your crosshair, and avoid looking at them.

The End is a floating island made up of end stone. This durable building material can't be pinched by endermen, making it ideal house-building material.

The ender dragon's health bar, visible as soon as you enter The End, replenishes whenever it flies by these things. Best take them out before tackling the scaly main course.

Next time...

GamesMaster Presents The Ultimate Guide to Minecraft Volume 8

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